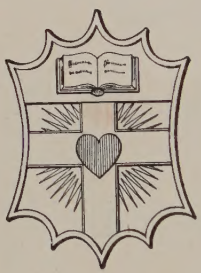
THE LIFE OF ISAAC WATTS

BY THOMAS WRIGHT



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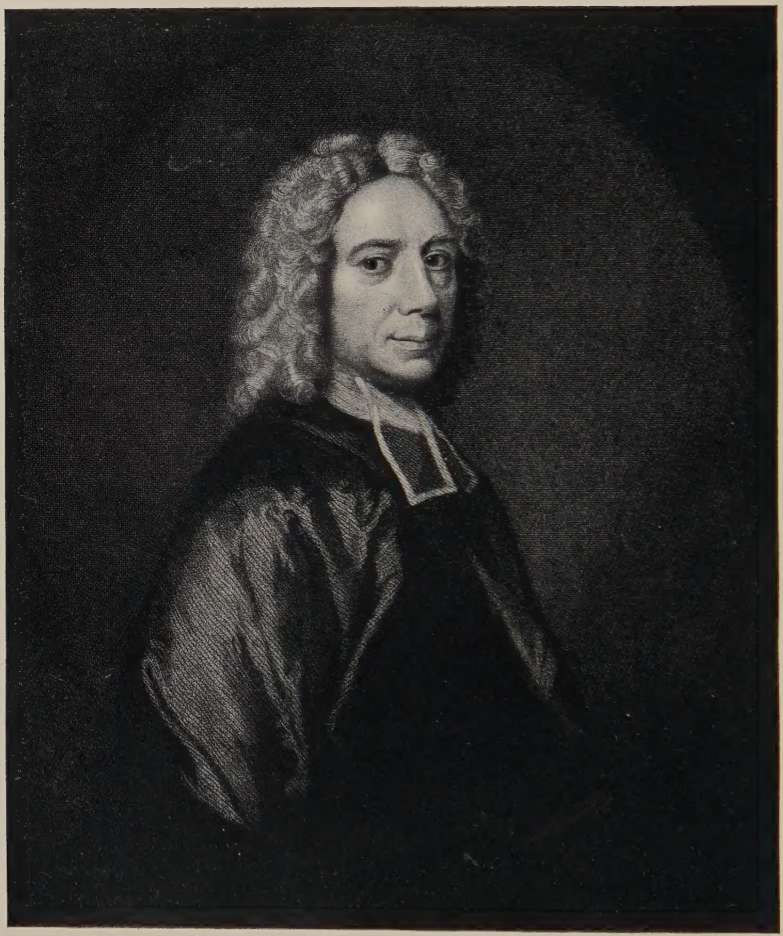

ISAAC WATTS.

From the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, now in the National Portrait Gallery.

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The Lives of the British Hymn-Writers

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BY

THOMAS WRIGHT

(Author of "The Life of William Cowper," "The Life of Augustus M. Toplady," &c.)

VOLUME III.

ISAAC WATTS

AND CONTEMPORARY HYMN-WRITERS.

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THIS VOLUME

IS DEDICATED TO

W. H. WATTS, Esq., J.P., Alderman,

AND AT ONE TIME LORD MAYOR OF LIVERPOOL, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM DR. WATTS'S FAMILY.

15-1809

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

17 July, 1674—1690

SOUTHAMPTON

		Page
1	Suckled on a Horse-block	1
2	"My Master is at Prayer"	8
3	"There was a Mouse"	16

CHAPTER II

1690—15 Oct., 1696

NEWINGTON GREEN

4	"Life consists of Mornings"	23
5	Interleaving and Annotating	28
6	"Behold the Glories of the Lamb"	31

CHAPTER III

15 Oct., 1696—Feb., 1699

TUTOR AT SIR JOHN HARTOPP'S

7	The Joy of Teaching	33
8	Mark Lane	36
9	Thoughts of Love. Freeby. Epsom	39

CHAPTER IV

Feb., 1699—18 Mar., 1702

ASSISTANT TO DR. CHAUNCEY

10	Assistant Minister at Mark Lane	45
11	Enoch Watts urges his Brother to Publish, Mar., 1700	46
12	Sir Thomas Abney. Death of Thomas Gunston, 11 Nov., 1700	48

CHAPTER V

18 Mar., 1702—June, 1703

IN SOLE CHARGE OF THE CHURCH IN MARK LANE

13	The Ordination, 18 Mar., 1702.	56
14	Self-Civil War	60

CHAPTER VI

June, 1703—July, 1707

"THERE IS A LAND OF PURE DELIGHT"

15 Rev. Samuel Price, 1703 63
16 At Pinners' Hall, June, 1704. *Horæ Lyricæ*, 1705 . . 65
17 A Visit to Southampton, May, 1706 69
18 Miss Elizabeth Singer, 1706 72

CHAPTER VII

July, 1707

HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

19 By the Sick Bed of Matthew Clarke, 1707 . . . 78
20 "Come, let us join our Cheerful Songs" . . . 79
21 "Come, we that love the Lord" 83
22 "When I survey the wondrous Cross" . . . 86
23 The Influence of John Mason 89

CHAPTER VIII

1709—1712

BOLD BRADBURY

24 "I am King of Me." Bury Street Chapel opened, 29 Sept., 1708 92
25 "Give me the Wings of Faith to Rise" . . . 99
26 Miss Singer again. Her Marriage 101
27 The Burning of the Meeting Houses, 1 Mar., 1710. Removal to Mr. Bowes', 30 Dec., 1710 . . . 104
28 Green Dragons, Bears and Ghosts, 1712—1713 . . 109

CHAPTER IX

Spring, 1714—Dec., 1718

WITH THE ABNEYS AT THEOBALDS. THE PSALMS OF DAVID IMITATED.

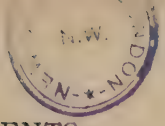
29 Theobalds, Spring, 1714 112
30 Death of Queen Anne, 1 Aug., 1714 116
31 "Oh, he was all my soul!" 13 May, 1715 . . . 123
32 "He wants me not," 12 Feb., 1718 124
33 Psalms of David Imitated 126
34 A Hostile Reception 131

CHAPTER X

Jan. and Feb., 1719

MAKE-A-NOISE TOM

35 "Shorthand and other Mechanisms of Hypocrisy" . . 135
36 Salters' Hall, 19 Feb., 1719. Death of Hughes, 17 Feb., 1720 136



CHAPTER XI

1720—19 March, 1728

HUMORIST, LOGICIAN, PREACHER

37 Divine and Moral Songs, 1720 143
38 Watts as a Humorist 149
39 Death of Sir Thomas Abney, 6 Feb., 1722 . . . 151
40 The *Logic*, 1724 153
41 Brother Bradbury once more, 1725. A Letter from the Elder Watts, 16 Feb., 1727 156
42 At Hedingham Castle again 163
43 "Fear Begone!" "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" . 164

CHAPTER XII

19 March, 1728—31 Oct., 1734

PHILIP DODDRIDGE

44 "Live while you live". 171
45 "The Mind's the Standard of the Man" . . . 174
46 Letter to the Rev. Henry Francis, 19 Mar., 1728 . . 176
47 *The Doctrine of the Passions*. Fear again, 1729 . . 178
48 *An Humble Address*, 12 Nov., 1729. John Hurrion . 179
49 The Cause at Olney, 23 Feb., 1732 181
50 Make Prayer a Pleasure, 1734 186

CHAPTER XIII

1 Nov., 1734—31 Dec., 1740

WITH THE ABNEYS AT STOKE NEWINGTON

51 William Coward; William Duncombe, 1734-5 . . 187
52 Abney Park, 1736 191
53 Death of Watts's Father, 10 Feb., 1737 . . . 197
54 Death of Mrs. Rowe, 20 Feb., 1737. *The World to Come*, 1739. Martin Tomkins 199

CHAPTER XIV

1 Jan., 1741—29 June, 1744

THE MAP OF MAN

55 The *Improvement of the Mind*, 1741. 210
56 Watts and Shorthand again 214
57 Thomas Gibbons, 1741 216
58 Know-thyself Mason, 24 Oct., 1741 218
59 John Brine. Deaths of Say, 12 April, 1743, and Eames, 29 June, 1744 219

CHAPTER XV

29 June, 1744—25 Nov., 1748

A GREY EVENINGTIDE

60 "The 45." Death of Colonel Gardiner, 21 Sept., 1745. Culloden, 16 April, 1746 223
61 "In what most harmed him his delight was greatest" . 226
62 Hallucinations 227
63 Watts's Will, 23 July, 1746. Persecuted by his Relations. Doddridge repulsed, Aug., 1746 229

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION. A CRIMSON SUNSET

64 "When I am Weak, then am I Strong" . . . 234
65 Portraits and Statues of Watts 247
66 Last Days of his Friends 250

HYMN-WRITERS CONTEMPORARY WITH WATTS

Browne, Simon . . 253
Burgess, Daniel . . 254
Cruttenden, Robert . . 254
Davis, Richard . . 255
Doddridge, Philip . . 256
Dutton, Anne . . . 258
Erskine, Ralph . . 259
Gibbons, Thomas . . 259
Hammond, William . 260
Humphreys, Joseph . 261
Hunt, John . . . 261
Killinghall, John . . 262
Mason, John . . . 262
Masters, Mary . . 264
Rowe, Elizabeth . . 264
Seagrave, Robert . . 266
Shepherd, Thomas . 266
Stennett, Joseph . . 267
Tate, Nahum, and Brady, Nicholas . . . 268

APPENDICES

1 Bibliography of Isaac Watts 270
2 List of Watts's Letters 272

LIST OF PLATES

1	Watts, by Kneller	*Frontispiece*
2	Page from Sum Book, filled by Isaac Watts (Watts's Father)	*facing page* 4
3	St. Michael's Church, Southampton.	,, 13
4	Watts's Birthplace	,, 13
5	South Castle, Jail	,, 16
6	Watts's Father	,, 33
7	The Grammar School, Southampton	,, 33
8	Map of Old Southampton	,, 36
9	Watts's Bibles.	,, 45
10	The Watts Window, Freeby	,, 48
11	The Lady Hartopp Window, Freeby	,, 48
12	All Hallows Staining	,, 65
13	St. Olave's, Hart Street	,, 65
14	Map of Mark Lane	,, 68
15	Fenchurch Street in the time of Watts	,, 77
16	Pinners' Hall, London	,, 81
17	Rev. Thomas Bradbury	,, 96
18	Rev. Samuel Say	,, 96
19	Bury Street Meeting House and Minister's Residence	,, 98
20	Map showing Site of Dr. Watts's Meeting House	,, 98
21	Title Page of First Edition of Watts's Hymns	,, 100
22	Title Page of Second Edition of Watts's Hymns	,, 109
23	The Synod at Salters' Hall	,, 139
24	The Danger of Delay.	,, 144
25	The Child's Complaint	,, 144
26	Against Pride in Clothes	,, 144
27	The Thief	,, 144
28	Praise to God for our Redemption	,, 144
29	The Rose	,, 144
30	Mrs. Rowe	,, 161
31	The Banqueting Hall, Castle Hedingham	,, 165
32	Castle and Mansion, Castle Hedingham	,, 165
33	Isaac Watts, drawn by Hilton	,, 172
34	Isaac Watts, from portrait by G. White, 1727	,, 176
35	Rev. Dr. Thomas Gibbons	,, 180
36	Rev. Philip Doddridge	,, 180
37	Dr. Watts, from the *Gospel Magazine*, June, 1779	,, 189
38	Portions of Dr. Watts's Letter to W. Duncombe, 9 March, 1736	,, 193
39	Abney House	,, 196
40	The Staircase, Abney House	,, 196
41	The Grove of Cedars and Yews	,, 205
42	Dr. Watts's Study, Abney House	,, 205
43	Dr. Watts's Mount, Abney House	,, 205
44	The Statue, Abney Park Cemetery	,, 205
45	Joseph Parker, Watts's Amanuensis	,, 224
46	Portion of Sermon in Metcalfe's Shorthand.	,, 224
47	Invitation to Watts's Funeral.	,, 241
48	The Monument in Westminster Abbey, as it appeared in 1821	,, 242
49	The Statue at Southampton	,, 249
50	The Tomb in Bunhill Fields	,, 252

PREFACE

I HAVE for some time felt that of the real Dr. Watts the general public has, notwithstanding the popularity of his hymns, only a very vague idea. He has been unfortunate in his biographers. The first account of him—that by Gibbons—is a brief and clumsy compilation; the next, Milner's, which is the work of a man with no idea of selection, contains vast arid expanses which alone are sufficient to repel the enquirer from its pages; the third and most readable, Paxton Hood's, is merely a gallimaufry of the other two, with absolutely nothing that is new. The present work, which is the result of careful and original research, is founded largely on materials which were inaccessible to my predecessors. It contains not only many hitherto unrecorded facts respecting Watts, but also citations from a number of hitherto unpublished letters. I have endeavoured to deal graphically with a subject which invites graphic treatment.

The impression created by previous biographies is that of a dull grey career in a dull, common-place age. Unintentionally, they have created an utterly false portrait of Dr. Watts, with a niggard and therefore inappropriate background. Instead of being the cold, unemotional figure that is generally supposed, Watts was a man of powerful passions, which were with great difficulty held in restraint. Notwithstanding his many ailments, his was a life flooded with sunshine, in an age glowing with colour and throbbing with character. If he loved a psalm of David, he could appreciate a verse of Virgil or an ode of Horace. Born of a fighting stock, he was on great occasions, notwithstanding his weakly constitution and his passion for compromise, as ready with the sword as with the trowel, for he knew perfectly well that the battle for liberty has to be fought over and over again; and that the weapons of those who love it require constant furbishing.

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I have grieved with others that in his declining years he should have wasted so much time in trying to prove the unprovable, to explain the inexplicable, to accommodate the unaccommodatable. It is well to try to bring Christians into line, and to do one's best to prevent unseemly disputes; but care should be taken lest the price paid be too large. Thomas Bradbury, who would not yield an inch, was in these matters, notwithstanding many glaring faults, a far better counsellor than Watts. We who live in an age that is not distinguished for religious courage, in an age that wastes its time in quixotic talk about the union of churches, can scarcely do other than be gentle with Watts's failing—for his great failing (let men say what they will) was excess of good nature—the fear of hurting anyone's feelings carried to the point of folly. I have dwelt, however, less on Watts's shortcomings than on his virtues. My aim has been to show how the study of his life can be of real value to us at the present day. I believe the contemplation of it will stimulate the reader to new endeavour, that it will deepen his love for pure religion, that it will teach him not only how to live, but also how to die.

The illustrations in this volume, many of which have not previously been reproduced, should add considerably to its interest. I wish to express my hearty thanks to those ladies and gentlemen who have assisted me. To Miss Izod I am indebted for the loan of Watts's two Bibles, with notes respecting their history, and to Mr. W. A. Oke for miscellaneous favours. The late Mr. S. Stainer sent me a number of pictures, and Mr. W. H. Watts, J.P., to whom this volume is dedicated, lent me a copy of Milner's *Life of Watts* with valuable insertions, including pictures and unpublished letters. Mr. Bryan Corcoran has been particularly kind. I have several times been his guest at the London Tavern, where we have talked over together the history of Mark Lane and its associations with Watts. I recall in particular the 14th of August, 1913, when the Rev. T. G. Crippen, Mr. C. H. Hopwood, and Mr. Walter Calvert, all of them authorities on Mark Lane and Watts, joined us at lunch, and communicated to me many interesting particulars. Finally, Mr. D. A. Ross, the genial and historically-minded proprietor of the tavern, became one of the party, and threw light on the history of the

neighbourhood by showing us, and explaining, a coloured sketch of Fenchurch Street done in Watts's time.

To the following ladies and gentlemen I am also indebted, and I thank them for their various kindnesses: Mr. James Bunce, Cheshunt; Mr. W. A. Cater, F.R.Hist.S.; Mr. W. J. Carlton; Mr. E. W. Crawley; Mr. J. R. Curry; Mr. E. J. Curtis, Southampton; Mr. R. W. Dixon; Mr. J. Elliston; Rev. Minos Devine, M.A., Abney Congregational Church; Mr. John Ferguson; Miss K. C. Field; Mr. Herbert Fitch; Mr. J. French, 182 High Street, Waltham Cross; Rev. J. Gay, Salters' Hall Church; Dr. Geikie; Mr. T. Rowland Hooper; Mr. J. W. Harmon (of Watts's birthplace, Southampton); Rev. J. E. Harker, Ashburton, Devon; Miss Isabel Hawkins; Mr. Gilbert W. Jennings, J.P.; The Librarian, Dr. Williams's Library, Gordon Square; Mr. Mackenzie, Cheshunt; Dr. J. H. A. Magendie; Miss Mary B. Palmer, Checkendon; Mr. George Preece, Librarian, Church Street Public Library, Stoke Newington; Mr. E. E. Rayner; Mr. W. Richford; Rev. Geo. S. S. Saunders (minister of Above Bar Church, Southampton); Mr. M. C. Taylor; Mr. A. J. Todd, Cheshunt; Mr. Arthur Wakerley; and to the various gentlemen whose letters are quoted in chapter 16. T. W.

ABBREVIATIONS.

Milner. Life of Watts, 1834.

Works. The Works of Watts, in 7 vols., 8vo, 1800. (See p. 272.)

Wilson. "The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches . . . in London." By Walter Wilson. 4 vols., 1808.

Bogue and Bennett. History of Dissenters from the Revolution in 1688 to the year 1808. By David Bogue and James Bennett. 4 vols., 1808.

Ivimey. A History of the English Baptists. By Joseph Ivimey. 4 vols., 1811.

Bunhill Memorials. "Bunhill Memorials. Sacred Reminiscences of Three Hundred Ministers . . . who are buried in Bunhill Fields . . . edited by J. A. Jones." 1849.

Transactions, Cong. Hist. Soc. Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society.

THE LIFE OF ISAAC WATTS.

CHAPTER I

17TH JULY, 1674—1690

SOUTHAMPTON

In a beautiful essay, written after a violent thunderstorm, Isaac Watts observes, "Happy the soul whose hope in God composes all his passions amid these storms of nature, and renders his whole deportment peaceful and serene amid the frights and hurries of weak spirits and unfortified minds." Watts has elsewhere many kindred observations upon the supreme importance of opposing a tranquil and even a cheerful mind to the disappointments, misfortunes, and buffets of life. He was himself an astonishing instance of calm amid turmoil and trouble. From youth to age, indeed, he almost invariably preserved, notwithstanding his sickly constitution and the storms which so persistently hammered him, a collected and unruffled mind. That was because his gaze reached habitually far beyond the circumscribed arena of so many of his contemporaries. "He sat," as Waterland would have put it, "as loose as possible to the world." If, however, Watts was habitually

1. Suckled on a Horse-block.

calm and collected, this was not owing to constitutional equanimity, for he was by nature of a passionate and waspish temper; but because, convinced of the goodness, lovingkindness, and justice of God, he had, with great pains, schooled himself into serenity. It was his habit to apply perseveringly to himself the "suppling oils" which he so persistently commends to his readers. He placed himself unreservedly in the hands of God; and God led him by a path which the vulture's eye had not seen.

Among hymn-writers, Isaac Watts stands absolutely alone. He has no peer. He is the greatest of the great. If nothing from his pen has attained to the popularity of Toplady's "Rock of Ages," or is quite so affecting as Cowper's "God moves in a mysterious way"; if he lacks the intense—the almost painful—spirituality of Joseph Hart, the mellifluence of Charles Wesley, the equipoise and gladness of John Newton, the mathematical exactitude and yet dithyrambic joyousness of Richard Burnham; on the other hand, he has written a larger number of hymns of the first rank than any other hymnist. The distinguishing characteristic of his work is a simple and noble grandeur. To recall "Our God, our help in ages past," "There is a land of pure delight," "Before Jehovah's awful throne," "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," "This is the day the Lord hath made," "When I survey the won-

drous cross," and "Come, let us join our cheerful songs," is at the same time, with any man of pure taste and genuine feeling, to thank God from the ground of the heart for the gift of so sublime and quickening a singer.

To turn to Watts's other works, there is conceivably no more delightful way of transporting ourselves into the charmingly stilted and spiritually healthy religious eighteenth century, than by reading the quaint and haunting *Divine and Moral Songs*, which was for two centuries a classic of the nursery, and which ought, with here and there a line or a word altered, to be in the hands of children to the end of time—text, coarse old woodcuts (for it was as a chap-book that the songs became famous), long s's, tail-pieces, and all. If Watts's *Logic* and *Improvement of the Mind* are no longer thumbed in our universities, that is all the more reason why the stimulating passages in them —and there are many—should be part of the equipment of every earnest student. If as a prose stylist Watts does not excel, nevertheless his volumes of sermons and his miscellaneous works are mines of piety and wisdom, with here and there a lode scintillating with gold. But it is as a hymn-writer, and as a hymn-writer alone, that his place in literature and in the hearts of men is inassailable. Each of his greater hymns is a mirror reflecting the pureness of his mind, his amiability, his philanthropy—in a word, his

godliness. Their influence has been felt in cottage and palace. They have brought hope and consolation to millions of the English-speaking race. His masterpiece, "Our God, our help in ages past," sung at a great and solemn national function, has thrilled every worshipper, nay, furthermore, has stirred to the very depths every heart capable of emotion in the greatest empire that the world has yet seen. It is the Imperial Anthem.

Of the ancestors of Isaac Watts the best remembered is his grandfather, Thomas Watts, commander of a warship; man of taste, courage, and resource.[1] He lost his life in the thick of a naval engagement. But, to use a delightful, antique expression, he was "in the secret"; and although

> "He fought in lower seas and drowned,"

both

> "Victory and peace he found
> On the superior shore."[2]

Isaac, son of Thomas Watts, received a classic education. His early intimacy with Latin is attested by his "Sum Book,"[3] in which most of the spaces unused for arithmetic are occupied by aphorisms and lengthy citations from Latin

[1] Once when in India being chased by a tiger Thomas Watts took refuge in a river. The tiger having followed him swimming he turned round, and gripping its head, forced it under the water, keeping it there till the animal was drowned—perhaps the most extraordinary duel between a man and a beast ever recorded.

[2] Isaac Watts. Thomas Watts's widow survived till 1693.

[3] This book was lent to me by Miss Mary B. Palmer, Hook End House, Checkendon, near Reading. After the death of Isaac Watts the elder it seems to have passed into the hands of Dr. Watts.

Addition of Spanish Money
A Table Thereof
8 Reyalls in plato make a peece of Eight
Reyalls in Copper make two peece
Addition of Cloth Measures
A Table thereof
Nosce teipsum
Sic transit gloria mundi

PAGE FROM SUM BOOK FILLED BY ISAAC WATTS, DR. WATTS'S FATHER.

authors, including the story of Pyramus and Thisbe from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This book, with its large and ornamental initial letters, some of which are coloured, and its scraps of original verse, bears witness not only to the neatness and orderliness of the writer, who was then (for it is dated 1664) a boy of 13, but also to the fact that like his father and his more gifted son, he had a passion for poetry and a taste for art. Two years previous, that is in 1662, had occurred the expulsion of the two thousand ministers from the Church of England; among them being the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson, Rector of All Saints, Southampton. This was apparently the beginning of Nonconformity in the neighbourhood. The worshippers met secretly in various houses, but most frequently in a tenement[1] just beyond one of the old entrances of the town, the quaint and crumbling Bargate. Another prominent Nonconformist who, likewise, had dared "to be singular," was the Rev. Giles Say, the ejected Vicar of St. Michael's, Southampton, who gathered together his people and conducted religious services, at first secretly and afterwards openly, in his own house[2] in Lords, now Blue Anchor, Lane. The condition of the country at the time was appalling. Southampton in particular was a sink of sin. The scum, the putrescence, the leprosy of the nation

[1] Which afterwards became the property of Isaac Watts the elder.
[2] Licensed for the purpose May 2nd, 1672.

seethed through its streets and under its gabled and projecting upper storeys and quaint sign-boards. The place rang with oaths and blasphemy, the taverns were nightly witnesses of lust, gluttony and drunkenness; open houses of abomination were maintained "with many inhabitants." There were revolting scenes depictable only by the pen of a Tacitus. A man, however, might "swear like a Briton" and be "as lewd and profane as a Londoner," and hardly anybody objected; but if he chose to say his prayers his own way, he was regarded as an evilly disposed person and a menace to the State.

Isaac Watts the elder, who had become a member of Robinson's church, was one of those who would pray as he chose, come what might. His unyielding disposition displayed itself particularly in a poem (for he was a prolific versifier) entitled "Ceremonies," which concludes:

> "I dare not with such superstition join,
> Give me pure doctrine, gospel discipline,
> Where God is served—that service is divine."

In another poem, "Divine Worship must be according to Divine Rule," he says:

> "We see the actions, but Heaven's eyes behold
> The secret springs from whence they do proceed;
> Not all that glistens must be counted gold;
> 'Tis pure intention consecrates the deed."

In 1672 relief was given to Dissenters by the Declaration of Indulgence, but in the following year the Indulgence was revoked, and Robinson,

Say, and Watts, refusing to conform, were thrown into Southampton Jail, a huge and gloomy pile known also as South Castle and God's House Gate, where for several months they languished while their unnatural persecutors outside wallowed shamelessly in sin. There are several references in the elder Watts's poems to his "darksome melancholy cell" and his iron shackles. The only effect, however, which persecution produced on him was to increase the fervour of his prayers. Genuine piety is always unsubduable. Nay, God's stars are always at their very brightest in Satan's murkiest nights. "The strongest man," says Menander, "is he who though foully wronged loses not his self-control." And so persecution has its advantages—enabling humanity, for one thing, to learn who are and who are not men of real grit and piety.

Watts was out of prison by 11th September, 1673, for on that day he married Sarah Taunton, daughter of Mr. Alderman Taunton,[1] a lady of religion and taste, and settled in the house now known as 41 French Street, where he conducted a boarding school. His mother and his wife's father and mother resided near. The young couple were constantly harassed by their enemies, and Watts was again threatened with imprisonment. Mrs. Watts was not endued with her husband's imperturbable composure, and the

[1] *Dr. Isaac Watts*. Pamphlet by Rev. H. H. Carlisle, 1874.

crying injustice with which they had been treated made her blood boil within her. One of the results of her agony and giddy terror was the puny size and sickly condition of the infant to which she gave birth on 17th July, 1674. This child—this midget—this brain with an excuse for a body—this fire-ball—was Isaac Watts, the subject of these pages. It is not surprising that a child born in such circumstances should have had, as had this child, "an excess of sharp juices mingled with his blood,"—that he should have been naturally of a flaming temper. Within a few days the father was once more a prisoner in his dark and unwholesome cell in South Castle, but his persecutors, with all their truculence, could do him no real harm, for there was a divine circle around him in all his dangers. It is on record that it was poor Mrs. Watts's custom to seat herself sorrowfully on a stone—a horse-block—near the prison door, and there to suckle her child—a hard seat, but not so hard as the hearts of her husband's relentless persecutors.

2. "My Master at Prayer."

The elder Watts's constant companion and delight in his cell in South Castle was a pocket Bible,[1] which contains (for it is still piously preserved) verses of his composition. It came to him from his father, and was for many years his daily companion. How

[1] This Bible and the large Family Bible presently to be described now belong to Miss Izod, Trescoe, Beach Road, Emsworth, Hants.

he loved it may be judged from the concluding lines of an acrostic, forming his own name, which he wrote on one of its blank pages:

> "Teach me to understand aright
> Thy Sacred Word, and with delight
> Shall I peruse it day and night."

Apparently he was released in Autumn, 1675.

As a mere baby little Isaac revealed an unusual passion for learning. When pence were given him, he would run to his mother, crying, "A book, a book! Buy me a book!" It is pleasing to picture the Watts family in the old house in French Street, to imagine them, for example, at breakfast in the ample kitchen, while a cheerful fire lights up the massive fire-dogs and the scriptural, blue Dutch tiles which decorated every Puritan hearth. Presently little Isaac enters, and consonant with the quaint but pleasing custom in pious households, the manikin (for children in those days were dressed precisely like their parents) falls on his knees to receive his father's morning blessing. After the meal, the Bible is taken from its resting-place—not the pocket volume lately mentioned, but a great Family Bible, bound in leather with silver corners, edges and clasps. This Bible—and like its companion, it is still carefully preserved—is unchanged, except that the silver has been removed by some irreverent hand. A number of the pages are worn, and there are thumb marks upon favourite chapters. Undoubtedly

there are tear-marks too, for Mrs. Watts must often have read it as she sat in solitary agony while her husband pined in prison. On a fly-leaf is a list of their children, who were, besides Isaac, *Richard*, born 17th July, 1676, who married 31st Aug., 1704, practised as a physician in London, and died 14th April, 1750; *Enoch*, born 11th March, 1678; *Thomas*, born 20th Jan., 1680, married 9th May, 1706; *Sarah* (the "Sarissa" of her brother's poems), born 31st Oct., 1681, married in Feb. 1708, Mr. Brackstone, a Southampton draper; *Mary*, born 13th Feb. 1684, buried 1st Jan., 1686; *Mary*, born 10th April, 1687, died 4th March, 1715; *Elizabeth*, born 15th Aug., 1689, died 11th Nov., 1691.[1] Like the Pocket Bible, it contains manuscript verses, some of which seem to be by Thomas Watts (Watts's grandfather), and others by Isaac Watts the elder. Others may be early efforts of the Hymn-writer. I pictured the elder Watts taking down this large Family Bible. After the reading of a chapter, he used to engage in prayer. He would never be disturbed in his devotions. If, while he was upon his knees, any one called to see him, the servant was sent out with the message, "My master is at prayer." The remainder of the day was devoted chiefly to the instruction of his pupils. Apparently the persecution to which he was subjected ruined his

[1] In Watts's *Posthumous Works* (1779), is a poem on her death. See also Gibbons' *Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.*, p. 486.

academy. In any case he is subsequently heard of as in business as a "clothier,"[1] that is, a cloth maker or cloth factor. Little Isaac, who had already received some instruction in Latin from his father, was sent at the age of six to the Grammar School, Southampton, which was conducted by the Rev. John Pinhorne, Rector of All Saints;[2] to whom he became warmly attached, and in 1683 he began Greek.

Isaac had many sweet recollections of the loving care of both parents—of "the wise counsels and impassionate advices which came daily dropping" from his father's lips, "and from the fondness of his heart;" of the tender admonitions that his mother gave him: "rising and going to rest, while she softened every word with a tear of love;" and of the painful solicitude of soul which both parents exhibited for his happiness and eternal interests. When, long after, Watts drew, in Phronissa,[3] the character of a kind and tender mother, doubtless memories of his own sweet mother haunted his mind. She "used to spend some hours daily in the nursery, and taught the young creatures to recite many a pretty passage out of the Bible, before they were capable of reading it themselves;

[1] He is so described in two legal documents, dated respectively 1700 and 1719. See *Dr. Isaac Watts*, a pamphlet by the Rev. H. Hermann Carlisle, LL.B., 1874.

[2] He was buried at Eling in the New Forest, where there is a monument to his memory.

[3] Works vii., 393. The name was doubtless suggested by that of Phronesia in Joshua Sylvester's poem "Panaretus."

yet at six years old they read the scriptures with ease, and then they rejoiced to find the same stories in Genesis and in the gospels which their mother had taught them before." Thus, though the "modes of breeding" had in those days, as Watts himself afterwards admitted, "too much narrowness and austerity,"[1] the tenderheartedness of his own father and mother agreeably tempered the rigour of their rule. Although possessed of comforts and even of luxuries, Watts's parents were thrifty to a fault. Indeed frugality was constantly inculcated among the Southampton Nonconformists, consequently "a bankrupt was an unknown name among them." They regarded bankruptcy as a well nigh unpardonable sin; unless it was the result of some sudden and unforeseen visitation.

Late in 1683 the elder Watts was once more flung into South Castle. A memorandum in his son's writing runs: "My father persecuted and imprisoned for Nonconformity, six months; after that, forced to leave his family and live privately in London for two years."

In Feb., 1685, Charles II., in a phrase of the day, "died twice," losing his mortal life and losing also the life that is incomparably more important, but the accession of James II.—a monster, who, "with the fumes of popery in his head and the spirit of it in his heart,"[2] had superintended

[1] Works vi., 391.

[2] Thomas Bradbury.

WATTS'S BIRTHPLACE.

From Photo lent by Mr. Joseph William Harman.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH,
Southampton.

personally the application of the boot and the thumbscrew—nowise improved the position of the Nonconformists, and in May of that year the elder Watts was still an exile. In a touching yet cheerful letter written to his family from London on the 21st of that month, he says (after commending them to God): "We must endeavour by patient waiting to submit to His will without murmuring; and not to think amiss of His chastening us, knowing that all His works are the products of infinite wisdom." He charges his children.—First. Frequently to read the Holy Scriptures, and that not as a task or burden, but as a delight. Secondly. To understand their sinful state, and "to begin betimes to be praying Christians," remembering that "Prayer is the best weapon for a saint's defence." Thirdly. To remember that their hope of salvation is founded on Jesus Christ. Fourthly. To keep perpetually in mind that God is their Creator, and to serve Him with a willing mind. Fifthly. To worship God in God's own way, that is, according to the rules of the Gospel, and not according to the inventions or the traditions of men. Sixthly. Not to entertain in their hearts any of the popish doctrines of having more mediators than one, and particularly not to pray to the Virgin Mary or any other mere creature. After warning them against "the popish doctrine of meriting by works of obedience," he adds, "Their doctrine of purgatory is abominable. Many other

erroneous and damnable doctrines they own; but you must receive no doctrine, save such as is rightly built upon the holy scriptures. My children, pray to God to give you the knowledge of His truth, for it is a very dangerous time you are like to live in." Seventhly, he bids them not to entertain hard thoughts of God, or of His ways, because His people are persecuted, "for Jesus Christ Himself was persecuted to death by wicked men for preaching the truth and doing good." Lastly, he urges them to be dutiful and obedient to all their superiors: to their grandfather,[1] and both grandmothers,[2] but in an especial manner to their mother. A few weeks after the despatch of this letter, its writer was able to return home. Those, indeed, who get near to God never can really be harmed. Come life, come death, all is one to them. It is the persecutor who is in the terrible pass.

Then occurred the rebellion of Monmouth, and young Isaac must have shuddered when he heard people tell of the shocking events that followed—of the fiendish brutality of the infamous Jeffreys, who insulted while he satiated his eyes with the sufferings of piety; of the judicial murder of Lady Lisle, who was beheaded in the market-place of Winchester, distant, be it noted, only ten miles from Southampton; of the mournful fate of the two young Hewlings, of the corpses dangling from

[1] Mr. Alderman Taunton. [2] Mrs. Taunton, who died 30th Mar., 1700, and Mrs. Thomas Watts, who died 13th July, 1693.

the Somerset gibbets. The Dissenters were thenceforward treated more intolerantly than ever. A hundred harrowing stories of their sufferings passed from mouth to mouth. James, his foul, painted, and avaricious mistresses, his fawning and venal judges, and his callous papist courtiers, believed they had Protestant England under their heel. They believed that the country was thoroughly cowed. But men who feed on the marrow of lions—that is to say, on the Bible—never are cowed. In the midst of this orgy of cruelty, the Dissenters, worshipping in cellar, garret, bakehouse or wood, and listening to ministers disguised with the tie-wig and sword of the man about town, the velvet and pomander of the physician, or the smock of the ploughman, never for a moment, though their miseries were well-nigh insupportable, lost heart or their faith in an omnipotent God. The conviction that Christ had died for them carried them through all. If one of these poor persecuted men, these heroes, if ever there were heroes, had been asked how he knew that Christ had died for him, his answer would have been, "Ah, Sir, it was afore decreed." Their belief in the doctrine of predestination as enunciated in the 8th of Romans, stood them in stead at every conjuncture. Nothing could shake it. These men were more desirous of living well than of living long. They took account less of their days than of their deeds—deeds pleasing to God. "Let us

draw nigh to Him," wrote one of their divines to his harassed flock, "and He will draw nigh to us." They doubted not that He knew what was happening, and that in His time He would arise and His enemies and theirs be scattered. So they prayed. God heard them pray.

3. "There was a Mouse."

To the importance attached to family prayer by the elder Watts, reference has already been made. One morning, while the household were on their knees, little Isaac was heard to titter! The other worshippers were aghast, and when devotions were over, his father demanded in a freezing tone, why he had had laughed. "Because," replied the boy nervously, while he pointed to the bell-rope that hung by the fire-place, "I saw a mouse running up that; and the thought came into my mind,

> "'There was a mouse for want of stairs,
> Ran up a rope to say his prayers.'"

The father, without another word, turned to a shelf and took down the rod, whereupon poor Isaac, falling upon his knees, begged, with tear-streaming eyes,

> "Oh father, father, pity take,
> And I will no more verses make."

But neither Watts's father nor his mother wished to discourage their son from writing in rhyme. Mrs. Watts, indeed, went so far as to offer the extravagant reward of one farthing to those of her husband's pupils who could compose

SOUTH CASTLE AND GOD'S HOUSE GATE, SOUTHAMPTON.

Here Isaac Watts's father was imprisoned.

the best lines; and Isaac, who also tried his skill, produced the couplet:

> "I write not for a farthing; but to try
> How I your farthing writers can outvie."

Another product of his boyish pen was an acrostic upon his name.

In 1686 the family lost their friend, the Rev. Giles Say, who left Southampton for Guestwick, Norfolk, where for some years he was in charge of a dissenting church; and while Isaac Watts the elder was deprived of an old and gracious adviser, Isaac the younger missed a school-fellow to whom he was sincerely attached—Samuel, Mr. Say's son—a shy, diffident, lovable lad, who was his junior by a few months.

About the same time occurred the following curious incident. A Southampton stone-mason, who had purchased an old building for its materials, went with a troubled face to the elder Watts, and said, "I have had a dream, and I thought the keystone of an arch fell and killed me."

"I am not for paying any great regard to dreams," observed Watts; "nor yet for utterly slighting them. If there is such a stone in the building as you saw in your dream . . ."

"There really is," interrupted the man.

"Then," continued Watts, "be very careful when taking down the building to keep far enough from that stone."

The mason expressed his determination to act upon the advice; but in a moment of forgetfulness he went under the arch, and the stone fell and killed him.

In the meantime Isaac was making notable headway at school. In Latin and Greek he had already outdistanced the other boys. At eleven he began French, at fourteen Hebrew; and Mr. Pinhorne, who marked his rapid progress, prophesied for him a brilliant career.

Brought up in an atmosphere of religion, it was natural that the boy should at an early age have serious thoughts; and we find among his memoranda: "Fell under considerable convictions of sin 1688, and was taught to trust in Christ I hope 1689." Further holy experiences followed, and eventually "An heir of glory was born."[1]

Early in 1688 King James issued a Declaration of Indulgence. This enabled the members of Robinson's Church, to the number of seventy, to meet once more openly for worship; and a little later, Robert Thorner, a Southampton philanthropist, acquired by lease the house[2] beyond the Bargate, and converted it into a meeting-house. On August 24th the church chose as its principal officers, two elders, one of whom was Thorner, and four deacons, one of whom was Isaac Watts.

[1] See Hymns, Book i., No. 101.

[2] Not, one judges, "from Isaac Watts," as is sometimes said, for later, when Thorner's lease had expired, Watts purchased the property. See *Dr. Isaac Watts*, by Rev. H. H. Carlisle, LL.B., p. 34.

Events in the country then moved swiftly. On November 5th, [1688] William of Orange landed at Tor Bay. James fled; Jeffreys was flung into the Tower; and the harlot, the priest, the informer, the sycophant, the persecutor, and the other abortions who had for so many years battened upon the miseries of the godly, slunk into hiding or stampeded to the coast towns, and in so undignified a manner as to be followed by the side-aching laughter (not unaccompanied by tears) of their quondam victims. Perhaps it was hardly right to view with relish—hardly right to laugh at—the predicaments even of a James, a Jeffreys, a Father Petre, creatures with millstone for hearts; but no man is perfect, and, poor souls! owing to their long-continued miseries, laughter had become for them something of a luxury. The atmosphere of Whitehall once more became wholesome. Devout and peaceable men went their ways or stayed at home without molestation. A new era had opened. God had arisen. His enemies were scattered. Instead of bestowing His favours in drops, here a little and there a little, He had taken "the whole bundle of mercies," for which His people had so long been waiting, and "wrapped them up in one great deliverance."[1] They had watched the hand of Providence, they, as Christian men, had expected an answer to their prayers, but hardly an answer

[1] Thomas Bradbury.

so overwhelming. Two words in particular escaped from all lips, "Oh, wonderful!" repeated again and again, "Oh, wonderful!" All hearts went out in gratitude to the Almighty Disposer of events.

Among the entries in the Above Bar Church Book is the following, under 14th February, 1689: "Received at a public collection, being a day of thanksgiving for national deliverance from Popery and arbitrary power, £3 os. 11d." There were probably some of young Isaac Watts's coppers in the elevenpence. William and Mary ascended the throne. The nation, with the enormities of the inhuman James—the sharpness of their persecution—fresh in their memories, went delirious with joy. All was pomp and hurry. Every town attempted to outvie its neighbour in scenic display. There were cavalcades of gentlemen and yeomen, processions of troopers gallantly mounted and richly accoutred, of sheriffs and bailiffs in gowns of sounding scarlet, crowds of exuberant townsfolk wearing orange ribbons and waving orange banners. The Dissenters, in their novel position of apparent security, assumed that their troubles were finally at an end, but, as presently transpired, they had still more than enough to endure; there were still hardly-contested battles to be fought. The lesson was soon to be driven home to them that liberty of the subject always was and always will be in danger, and that any form of

persecution that has disgraced a country may and probably will be repeated. Satan works in circles.

When William arrived at St. James's Palace a deputation of Dissenting ministers waited upon him; and delivered an address, in which they congratulated him on the prosperous conclusion of his heroical expedition, and prayed for the success of his future endeavours for the defence and propagation of the Protestant interest throughout the Christian world.

The King, in reply, said he had come on purpose to defend the Protestant religion, and that by the grace of God he would always adhere to it, and do his utmost on its behalf. Under the new ruler the morale of the whole kingdom improved. Following the disappearance of the pestiferous influence of priest and courtezan, Sardanapalus turned Hercules. Old times—the tremendous days of Oliver—returned, and England once more took its place of pride among the nations.

By this time Watts had reached the age of 17; and a local physician, Dr. John Speed, observing his piety and his remarkable talents, offered to defray his expenses at one of the Universities; but, as consent would have necessitated conformity to the Church of England, Watts respectfully declined the generous offer, observing that he had decided to throw in his lot with the Dissenters. He left school in 1690, and by way of gratitude to

his "faithful preceptor," Mr. Pinhorne, he penned to him some Pindaric lines, in which he recalled the delightful hours which they had spent together in the company of Homer, Virgil, Horace, Casimire,[1] Buchanan, and other fragrant writers, ancient and modern; while his detestation of persecution led him to compose an epigram on the destruction, by order of Louis XIV., of the Protestant Church at Montpelier.[2]

It was then decided that Watts should proceed to London in order to study at the Nonconformist Academy at Stoke Newington Green, which was under the charge of the Rev. Thomas Rowe. He had been thoroughly happy at Southampton; though never strong, he had rarely been out of health, and he was devoted to his home; therefore it is not surprising that he felt some sadness when for the first time "rolling wheels" bore him away from his native town, and deprived him of "the pleasures of a parent's face."[3]

[1] Casimirus Sarbiewski (1595—1640).
[2] Works vii., p. 243.
[3] Works vii., p. 405.

CHAPTER II

1690—15TH OCT. 1696

THE ACADEMY AT NEWINGTON GREEN
TWO AND A-HALF YEARS AT SOUTHAMPTON

Stoke Newington was at this time a country village, surrounded by cornfields, the best houses being occupied by City magnates, many of whom were Dissenters. The Rev. Thomas Rowe, the head of the Academy, was also minister of the church that met at Girdler's Hall,[1] Bassishaw, now Basinghall Street, and on Sunday mornings the students worshipped there. Watts became as closely attached to Rowe as he had been to Pinhorne; and in later years, recalling the happy years spent at Newington Green, he wrote:

4. "Life Consists of Mornings."

> "I love thy gentle influence, Rowe,
> Thy gentle influence, like the sun,
> Only dissolves the frozen snow,
> Then bids our thoughts like rivers flow,
> And choose the channels where they run."[2]

He commended Rowe also for electing to remain a bachelor, adding: "It is five hundred to one if a tutor meets with the one only pious, prudent and invalu-

[1] A little to the north-east of the Guildhall.
[2] Works vii. 259.

able partner." Among Watts's fellow-students were Daniel Neal,[1] who attained fame as the historian of the Puritans; John Evans, afterwards Dr. John Evans,[2] and author of the once popular *Discourses on the Christian Temper;* Joseph Standen, who, after superintending a Nonconformist cause at Newbury, conformed to the Established Church; Samuel Say, Watts's shy and diffident schoolmate, who became minister at Westminster chapel; John Wilson, afterwards of Warwick; the ambitious Joseph Hort, who conformed and rose to be Archbishop of Tuam; the thoughtful and romantic John Hughes, now remembered by his papers in the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*,[3] and the *Guardian;* Jeremiah Hunt, afterwards Dr. Jeremiah Hunt,[4] of Pinner's Hall, Old Broad Street; and, towards the end of his period there, John Shute Barrington, afterwards Viscount Barrington—a lifelong friend. Watts, Say, Hort and Hughes were drawn together by kindred tastes, and particularly by a common love for the masterpieces of Greek, Latin and English literature. Men always get what they attract to themselves, and life-through Watts was lode-stone to the pious, the philanthropic, and the cultured. Say had taken infinite pains to strengthen himself by

[1] Minister of the chapel (Independent) in Silver Street, Wood Street, Cheapside. See Wilson iii. 91—102.

[2] Minister of the chapel in New Broad Street, Petty France. See Wilson ii. 212—221.

[3] Nos. 210, 224, 230, 316, 375, 467, 525, 537, 541, 554.

[4] See Wilson ii. 262—270.

attention to the two great rules of life. In respect to the first, "Know thyself," he had been successful; in respect to the second, "Reverence thyself," he failed ignobly. Consequently all through his career we shall find him being pricked forward, drawn along, buttressed up by others. Pliny,[1] indeed, had portrayed Say to a hair 1700 years previous in his description of the gifted and amiable but helpless Arrianus Maturius. Hughes was just the opposite. He never knew himself, that is, he never was conversant with his own powers, but he adequately reverenced himself. This is revealed in the papers which some years afterwards he wrote for the *Spectator*. "I am fully persuaded," commences one of them,[2] "that one of the best springs of generous and worthy actions is the having generous and worthy thoughts of ourselves;" and in another (No. 554) he quotes with approval the remark of a French author:[3] "No man ever pushed his capacity as far as it was able to extend." Again and again he is upon the subject of ambition. He is ever lashing himself, urging himself on. Lack of leisure, he insisted, is an excuse that no man should put forward, and he said paradoxically, "If I had less leisure I should have more." To the circumstance that Say was wanting in self-dignity, and Hughes in self-know-

[1] Letters, Book 3, Letter 2.

[2] No. 210, 31st Oct., 1711. See also No. 537, On the Dignity of Human Nature.

[3] Perhaps La Rochefoucault.

ledge, must be assigned their comparative failure in life. Watts, who was able to build up his life upon both rules, became a success.

Each member of the quaternion wrote in verse, and several of the poems inspired by the friendship have been preserved, including some verses after Martial,[1] written by Watts and addressed to Hort. The quadruple friendship lasted lifelong. There were many literary duels between members of the little coterie. Watts and Hughes, for example, formed different estimates of Casimire, the Polish poet, for while Watts held that Casimire had in him more spirit, force, magnificence and fire than any other modern poet, Hughes showed himself alive to the Pole's defects, and particularly the ill government of his fancy. Hughes, however, was at one with Watts in his admiration of Pindar. When Watts began to write, these two poets were his chief models, and two worse models no Englishman could have, for our language does not lend itself to good work on the lines of either. It was only when Watts at last snapped his fetters and placed himself beyond the mischievous influence of these poets—when he followed the precept of Paracelsus, "Be yourself"—that he attained success as a poet. "Young man," said a friend, Sir Edmund King, to him, "I hear that you make verses. Let me advise you never to make them except when you can't help it."

[1] To Cirinius. Epigrams, Book viii. 18.

Hungering after knowledge, and yearning to be abreast of the age in letters, Watts applied himself with assiduity to his studies, for he agreed with his friend Hughes, that men lack industry rather than time or abilities. He worked at fever point, panting and gasping. Among his unwise habits was that of studying far into the night, and his continued vigils wrought havoc on a frail constitution. If a dim winking light broke at midnight the darkness of Newington Green, it was certain evidence that Watts was poring over his books. The dwindling candle was followed by dwindling health. Insomnia succeeded, and for years, in order to obtain sleep, he was obliged to have recourse to opiates. When it was too late, he recognised his mistake. "Midnight studies," he says, in a sermon,[1] are prejudicial to nature, and painful experience calls me to repent of the faults of my younger years." If Watts could have read Stendhal's saying, "Life consists of mornings," he would probably have suggested as an improvement, "Life consists of early mornings," for by the time he had begun to write his hymns he had abandoned his midnight studies and had become a very early riser. The best of his hymns indeed have all the exhilarating freshness of the new-born day. Still, all being said, and flatter ourselves as we may, art and literature are, in reality, only two beautiful diseases. Hundreds have died of them,

[1] Works i. p. 333.

thousands been disabled by them. He is the wisest man who lives as close as possible to nature, and has not too much to do with either.

Among the extant college compositions of Watts are twenty-two Latin Essays upon physical, metaphysical, ethical and theological subjects, and two English dissertations prepared with a view to their being read before his fellow-students as subjects for debate.

5. Interleaving and Annotating.

It was his practice both at this period and later, to abridge and annotate the various important books that he read, and when in after years he wrote his *Improvement of the Mind* he urged others to follow his example. "Shall I be so free," he there observes, "as to assure my younger friends from my own experience that these methods of reading will cost some pains in the first years of your study? But the profit will richly compensate the pains." Among the volumes which he abridged were the Rev. Theophilus Gale's[1] *Court of the Gentiles*, and several of the works of Burgersdicius.[2] He also used to interleave books for the purpose of annotation, as for example the *Westminster Greek Grammar*, and Bishop Wilkins's *Ecclesiastes*.[3] To the latter he added

[1] Gale was founder of the Academy at Stoke Newington. See Watts's Works iii. 94, and Wilson, iii. 161—168.

[2] Or Burgersdyk, a famous Dutch logician, born 1590, died 1629.

[3] John Wilkins (1614—1672) who married Robina, sister of Oliver Cromwell, and became in 1668 Bishop of Chester. He wrote *Ecclesiastes, or a Discourse of the Gift of Preaching as it falls under the Rules of Art*, 1646.

remarks on the names of authors and their writings, the result partly of his own reading and partly of conversations with Mr. Rowe. Of his classical studies—and particularly of his inclination to Epictetus, Virgil, Ovid, Horace[1], Lucan, and Marcus Aurelius—there are reminiscences in his *Strength and Weakness of Human Reason.*[2] Of Milton, Cowley, and other English writers, he was a careful student, and like so many of his contemporaries, he was largely influenced by the works of the Berkshire[3] poet, Joshua Sylvester, who is best remembered by his translation of Du Bartas. With a view to perfecting himself as a preacher, he attended the most gifted ministers of the day; and he spoke with enthusiasm of three in particular: the columnar, eagle-eyed, awe-inspiring John Howe[4], who had been Oliver Cromwell's chaplain; and had for a quarter of a century preached "incomparably" at the Presbyterian Chapel in Silver Street[5]; the ethereal and angelic Thomas Gouge[6] of the meeting house "near the Three Cranes, Thames Street," and Joseph Stennett,[7] of Pinner's Hall, orator and hymn-writer; and in honour of Howe and Gouge, both of whom he knew person-

[1] In *Posthumous Works*, Vol. I., are his translations from Horace and other Roman Poets.

[2] *Works* iii., pp. 39, 40, 54, 75.

[3] Sylvester resided at Lambourne, in Berkshire.

[4] See Wilson iii. 19—37.

[5] Off Wood Street, Cheapside; Howe died 2nd April, 1706. For reference to the other Chapel (Independent) in Silver Street, see p. 24.

[6] Thomas Gouge, see Wilson ii. 69—72, he died 8th Jan., 1700, and was succeeded by Thomas Ridgeley.

[7] The first of the three great Stennetts.

ally, he wrote glowing lyrics.[1] To two other of his contemporaries, he also paid special tributes—John Flavel,[2] whom he justly eulogises as that "most excellent, practical and evangelical writer"; and Richard Baxter,[3] whose dying words, "Lord, when Thou wilt, what Thou wilt, and how Thou wilt," sank deep into his soul, and coloured the whole of his subsequent career. Indeed, he always loved the finest company, whether in actual life or in books; and he spoke from the heart when he wrote:—

> "Let others choose the sons of mirth,
> To give a relish to their wine;
> I love the men of heavenly birth,
> Whose thoughts and language are divine."[4]

On 30th Sept., 1691, he wrote a Latin poem[5]; "I felix, pede prospero," on the occasion of his brother Enoch's[6] going a voyage; and to his brother Richard, who was studying for the medical career, he sent on 17th Jan., 1693, a Latin letter, commending him to God, and praying that their mutual affection might daily increase. In 1693 he became a member of Mr. Rowe's church. In the spring of 1694 he left the Academy, and returned to Southampton, where he spent the next two-and-a-half years.

[1] Works vii. 260, 297.

[2] Flavel died 26th June, 1691, and was buried in St. Saviour's Church, Dartmouth, Devon. The brass to his memory, which was originally in St. Saviour's, is now in the Flavel Memorial Church, Dartmouth.

[3] Baxter died 8th Dec., 1691.

[4] Ps. xvi., First part, verse 4.

[5] Milner, p. 16. [6] Enoch was 13.

We learn from Watts's sister Sarah (Mrs. Brackstone), that while he was at home he he laid himself out to lead the other members of the family, most of whom were young, "into a knowledge of the wonderful works of God," and it was probably at this time that he wrote the lines on his favourite theme, which begin :—

6. "Behold the Glories of the Lamb." Circa 1695.

> "My God, I love and I adore:
> But souls that love would know Thee more.
> Wilt Thou for ever hide, and stand
> Behind the labours of Thy hand?"[1]

The psalms sung at the Southampton meeting-house seem to have been taken from the version of Sternhold and Hopkins; but in any case the compilation was one of trifling merit, as were most of the earlier renderings. One day, after returning from meeting, Watts inveighed forcibly against the uncouthness and general poorness of the psalmody, which he declared to be entirely wanting in the dignity and beauty that should characterise every part of a Christian service.

"Try, then," said his father, "whether you can yourself produce something better." Animated by the suggestion, Watts at once applied himself to the task, and after a while, composed what is now the first hymn in Book I. of his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*:—

> "Behold the glories of the Lamb,
> Amidst His Father's throne:

[1] Reliquiæ Juveniles. Works vii. 304.

Prepare new honours for His name,
And songs before unknown.

Let elders worship at His feet,
The church adore around,
With vials full of odours sweet,
And harps of sweeter sound.

Those are the prayers of the saints,
And these the hymns they raise;
Jesus is kind to their complaints,
He loves to hear our praise."

There are eight verses in all, but the last five show a falling off from the magnificent opening. He wrote some other hymns at this time; produced several occasional pieces, including lines, "On the sight of Queen Mary in the year 1694"; and corresponded with some of his Stoke Newington friends, whose identity he hides behind the fancy names of "Horatio" and "Procyon,"[1] though Horatio may have been Say, and Procyon, Hughes.

[1] Works vii. 368, 405.

WATTS'S FATHER.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, SOUTHAMPTON.

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON
N.W.

CHAPTER III

15TH OCT., 1696—FEB., 1699

TUTOR AT SIR JOHN HARTOPP'S

In the autumn of 1696, Watts received an invitation to become tutor to the family of Sir John Hartopp, whose principal seat was Fleetwood House,[1] Church Street, Stoke Newington. Sir John and his wife Elizabeth, who was daughter of General Fleetwood,[2] had a son, John, and several daughters, one of whom, Frances, became the wife of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Nathaniel Gould.[3] The Fleetwood and Hartopp families were doubly connected, for Sir John Hartopp's sister Mary married General Fleetwood's son. Sir John, who had an estate at Freeby, near Melton Mowbray, in Leicestershire, had been parliamentary representative and High Sheriff of that county. Previous to the accession of William III., he had, like all other prominent Dissenters suffered severely for his religious principles, having been mulct in fines to the extent of several thousand pounds. To his character and accomplishments Watts pays glowing tributes.

7. The Joy of Teaching.

[1] Mr. Thomas Gunston's new house (afterwards Abney House), was erected near it.

[2] Who had married Cromwell's daughter, Bridget.

[3] Knighted after his wife's death.

"When I name Sir John Hartopp," he says, "all that knew him will agree that I name a gentleman, a scholar and a Christian. He had a taste for universal learning. But the Book of God was his chief study and his divinest delight; his Bible lay before him night and day. He was desirous of seeing what the Spirit of God said to men in the original languages; for this end he commenced some acquaintance with Hebrew when he was more than fifty years old. His doors were ever open, and his carriage was always friendly and courteous to the ministers of the gospel. He was a present refuge for the oppressed, and the special providence of God secured him and his friends from the fury of the oppressor. He often entertained his family in the evening worship on the Lord's day with excellent discourses, some of which he copied from the lips of some of the greatest preachers of the last age." When reading these passages Sir John was occasionally overcome with emotion. The tears would stand in his eyes, his "voice would be interrupted, and there would be a sacred pause and silence." With all the members of Sir John's circle Watts was on agreeable terms. He addressed lyrics to Nathaniel Gould,[1] and to Sir John's nephews, the young Fleetwoods; and he inscribed two poems to his pupil John Hartopp,[2] one being an imitation of an ode by Casimire, and the other the lines commencing:

[1] Works vii., 254. [2] Works vii., 273.

"Hartopp, I love the soul that dares
Tread the temptations of his years
Beneath his youthful feet;
Fleetwood and all thy heavenly line,
Look through the stars and smile divine
Upon an heir so great."

To Watts, teaching was no trial. He regarded it, indeed, as a joy—as one of the noblest of occupations. "How lovely is it," he says,[1] "to see a teacher waiting upon those that are slow of understanding, and taking due time and pains to make the learner conceive what he means without upbraiding him with his weakness." To a schoolmaster he once said, "Youth, my dear friend, is the time to acquire knowledge; and as you have the important charge laid upon you of instructing some of the rising generation, let me beg, as you wish well to your precious and immortal soul, that you will leave nothing undone to make your pupils love the beauties of religion. Teach them that religion has nothing in it of a gloomy nature; for how can that be gloomy which leads to everlasting pleasures?" This delight in education abode with him all through his life. There was always a tutor—a schoolmaster—hidden within his Geneva gown, and he was never so happy as when writing rhymes or books or making *memoria technica* to smooth the way for the youthful learner. As a young man he made them for John Hartopp, as an old man for the scholars of Cheshunt Charity

[1] Works i., 320.

School. His first labour of this kind, his *Logic*, was written about 1698, though it did not reach the press till 1724.

8. Mark Lane.

Sir John Hartopp and his wife were members of a church[1] which met in Mark Lane, that busy thoroughfare which was then, as now, one of the most famous streets not only in London, but in the whole world—the street, as it is proudly called, of corn and of wine. The church was superintended by the Rev. Isaac Chauncey, a learned but unsuccessful minister, who was assisted by the aged Rev. Edward Terry. The precise site of the chapel is uncertain, but it appears to have stood in Blind Chapel Court,[2] on the east side of Mark Lane, not far from Fenchurch Street, and nearly opposite Star Alley, which led to the Church of All Hallows Staining, of which the tower alone now remains.[3] Blind Chapel Court is a corruption of Blanchapleton, a manor of which the north-eastern side of Mark Lane formed part, and Watts's Chapel[4] may have

[1] This church was founded about 1658, its first pastor being Joseph Caryl, rector of St. Magnus, who is remembered on account of his colossal Commentary on the book of Job. The church met at first in the house of Thomas Knight, merchant, in Leadenhall Street. Caryl's successors were the famous Dr. John Owen, David Clarkson, Isaac Loeffs (during whose pastorate the Society removed to Mark Lane), and Isaac Chauncey, who became its minister in 1687.

[2] In Mr. Bryan Corcoran's Guide to St. Olave's, Hart Street, is a reference to a tradesman's token worded thus:

"Joseph . Taylor . his . ½ = The Cooper's Arms in . Blanch . Appleton . Court . at . the . end . of . Marke . Lane." See also Timbs' *Curiosities of London*, enlarged edition.

[3] The northern part of Mark Lane is in the parish of All Hallows Staining, and in the Aldgate, Langbourne, and Tower Wards of the City of London. The east wall of the church abutted on Mark Lane.

[4] The Mark Lane Branch Post Office probably occupies part of its site.

OLD SOUTHAMPTON.

Showing French Street (K) where Watts was born; Lord's Lane (Q) where Giles Say lived; God's House Gate, also called South Castle and Southampton Jail (D); Bargate (5) a little to the north of which, on the east side of the road, stood the old Meeting House.

been a portion of the old mansion converted into a dwelling-house for some Mark Lane magnate. Mark Lane, with which Watts was destined to be intimately connected for twelve years (1696 to 1708), was in those days a street of handsome houses, some of which might even be described as palaces. They were the homes of the opulent merchants who had gained their wealth chiefly through trading in corn and wine in the market, which owed its origin to rights granted to an ancient Lord of the Manor of Blanchapelton, and which gave the street its name, Mart—or as eventually it became twisted to—Mark Lane. No. 33, once the abode of old merchant princes of the Neville and Haddon families, was a particularly large and handsome house, with fine oak carving over the entrance gateway and in its principal rooms.[1] But on the south side of Hart Street, near its junction with Mark Lane, there stood a mansion that was if anything even more magnificent,[2]—the Elizabethan "Whittington's Palace," which may or may not have occupied the site of Whittington's house, but which owed its name to the number of cats' heads carved on the ornamental front and among the decorations of the interior. At the north-west corner, formed by the union of Mark Lane with Fenchurch Street, stood the Magpie and Horseshoe Inn, and near it, sepa-

[1] The entrance gateway and the doorway are now preserved in the South Kensington Museum.

[2] Demolished in 1801.

rated by two small tenements, the King's Head Tavern, where Princess, afterwards Queen, Elizabeth dined after her liberation from the Tower, on 10th May, 1554.[1] The present palatial London Tavern occupies the sites of the old King's Head Tavern, the two tenements just mentioned, and the Magpie and Horseshoe. Its imposing facade is adorned with statues of Queen Elizabeth and various great seventeenth century soldiers and statesmen, while a number of designs in the richly decorated great dining-room—the Queen's room—commemorate the various associations of the neighbourhood with Tudor beauty, wisdom, and valour. The ancient market is now represented by two Corn Exchanges—the old, erected in 1747 and rebuilt in 1881, and the New, erected in 1827. The whole of the parish is honeycombed with wine-cellars; for whatsoever monarch occupied the English throne King Bacchus and Queen Ceres ruled undisturbed in Mark Lane. When the merchant magnates died, they were carried with funereal pomp to one of the two nearest churches —St. Olave's, Hart Street, or All Hallows Staining.[2] St. Olave's, which is crowded with memorials to bygone Mark Lane magnificoes, some of whom were Lord Mayors of London, derives its greatest fame from its association with, and its monument

[1] The metal dish, with its cover, used by the Queen on this occasion is still preserved at the London Tavern.

[2] The monuments in All Hallows Staining were removed to St. Olave's, Hart Street, when the church of All Hallows was demolished, in 1870.

to, Samuel Pepys, the diarist, who was a familiar figure in the Lane[1] and its purlieus at the time it was frequented by Watts. All Hallows Staining was, we noticed, situated just opposite the court that led to the chapel in which Watts worshipped, and of which he subsequently became pastor; and the happy idea has occurred to Mr. Bryan Corcoran of 31 Mark Lane to place a memorial to Watts on the south wall of this ancient and historical pile, which must for many years have been a familiar object to Watts's eyes. Lovers of Watts's hymns will be delighted to hear that the project is speedily to be carried out, and that the unveiling of the memorial is to be part of some public function.

9. Thoughts of Love.

Watts's correspondence at this period was principally with his shy and timorous friend, Samuel Say, who had become chaplain to a gentleman at Lyminge, Kent, and the poetically-minded John Hughes. In their letters the young men put aside all reserve (for Say could be open enough with Watts), and they communicated to each other in particular their most retired opinions on the subject of love, often rallying each other upon it. As we have seen, the Greek, Latin, and English amatory poets had been their delight at the Academy. Say had lost his heart to a young

[1] Watts's association with Mark Lane extended from 1696 to 1708. Pepys died in 1703.

lady who is known to us as "Cecilia"; and walking, pensive, in the "secret grove" at Lyminge, he asked himself in lines suggested by a passage in Ovid:[1]

> "Why am I thus of late uneasy grown?
> Why thus aside my best loved Milton thrown?
>
> * * * *
>
> Why do my eager thoughts still fixt retain
> Cecilia's pleasing image in my brain?"

To declare the state of his mind to Cecilia, however, was more than he dared do; but, fortunately, as we shall see, the lady was less shy than the gentleman. John Hughes, who regarded Watts as an authority on love poetry, also wrote to him several letters on the subject, and submitted to his criticism some verses presented to a lady, with a drawing (by the author) of Cupid. This was on May 30th, 1696. In 1697 Watts sent to Hughes a sort of essay about "Fools"; telling him that the characters drawn were "true copies of nature." Hughes, in reply, after expressing thanks for "a witty and diverting letter," observed that "fools, though a very troublesome sort of insect," are not so bad as villains; and he portrays a man who, under the veil of affection, was systematically endeavouring to ruin him. He concludes by congratulating himself on being able to call Watts a friend. Watts had not himself at that time met the lady of his dreams,

[1] Amores, Book ii., Elegy i.

but as his poem, "The Indian Philosopher," shows, he lived in hope. The theory of the philosopher was that one mould is made by Omnipotence for each couple of souls, who are then sent down to earth in order to seek their respective bodies. On the road, however, some of them become separated from their fellows, and, consequently, on reaching earth get mated to wrong and uncongenial souls. The philosopher is made to conclude:

> "Happy the youth that finds his bride
> Whose birth is to his own allied;
> The sweetest joy of life!
> But, oh! the crowds of wretched souls
> Fettered to minds of different moulds,
> And chained to eternal strife."

And Watts comments,

> "Might I but see
> That gentle nymph that twinned with me,
> I may be happy, too."[1]

That desirable young lady, however, went astray somehow; and Watts, having no real object on whom to fix his affections, was obliged, for the time being, to be satisfied with the graces of the Lesbias, Cynthias, and other pretty ladies in Catullus, Tibullus, Ovid,[2] and—his own expression—"the sweet English Cowley."

The friendship between Say and Watts proved

[1] His poem, "Few Happy Matches," written in Aug., 1701, is in a similar strain.

[2] Ten years later he burnt several of the amatory poems of Ovid, Martial, Oldham, and Dryden, and wrote a poem on the occasion.

to be one of the influences which induced Watts some years later to apply himself seriously to the work of "imitating" the Psalms. Say and Watts had often criticised severely the older metrical versions; and Say not only wrote paraphrases to some of the Psalms, but submitted them to both Watts and Hughes. This was at the end of 1697. Watts's letter of acknowledgment is lost, but Hughes replying on 6th November, 1697, said, "I give you my hearty thanks for your ingenious paraphrase, in which you have so generously rescued the noble Psalmist out of the butcherly hands of Sternhold and Hopkins." Further than this, Say, owing to his fatal diffidence, did not go. He had conceived the idea of paraphrasing the whole of the Psalms. There was the man, there the ladder, but the man did not climb. Who eventually climbed, lovers of Watts are well aware. Again, Say had studied carefully the subjects of psychology and the harmony of numbers in prose and verse. Owing to his timidity his opinions were kept back till after his death. He made a pedestal; but only for the statue of another (John Mason, as we shall see). He preached excellently; but he—or, rather, the importunity of his congregation—published only a few stray discourses. Fame with doffed hat humbly waited again and again, but to no purpose, at the door of perhaps the shyest—the most diffident—man of real merit who ever lived.

In February, 1698, Watts heard again from "Procyon" (Hughes, perhaps) who complained that he met with so many persons of narrow and uncharitable souls, obstinate in opinions, and violent against all notions and practices except those which they themselves had embraced. Watts, in reply, agreed that it was quite impossible to move some people—that you might as well try to "teach an ass Latin." The gist of his advice is that although you cannot move these men by argument, one line of action in any case is open to you, namely, "to engage their affections a little." He believes that "affection is the great gate of entrance into the judgments of the multitude, and reason but the back door." The softer arts of winning upon men are to be studied by us as well as hard arguments. "We are to try every method" to reduce our neighbours to virtue and religion; "and not desist, though we meet with but little success. It is a coward soldier that declines the fight because he cannot every day gain a new victory."

On 17th July, 1698, his birthday, Watts delivered his first sermon, and in the following month he preached several times at Southampton. Sometimes he accompanied the Hartopps to their Leicestershire seat, Freeby, and conducted service in the ancient stone meeting-house which still stands in the village. When a few years ago the building was restored, two stained glass windows

were inserted, one on each side of "Dr. Watts's pulpit." In that to the left Watts[1] is shown in a preaching gown and looking upon a cross—"the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died,"[2] in that to the right is "Mistress Mary Hartopp[3] with a spinning wheel." Above the former is the inscription :—

DR. ISAAC WATTS IN THIS BUILDING
PREACHED THE CROSS OF CHRIST;

above the latter,

HE WAS TUTOR AT THAT TIME TO
MISTRESS MARY HARTOPP OF FREEBY.[4]

Sir John Hartopp also had a house in Church Street, Epsom; and in the Independent Chapel which adjoined it Watts also occasionally preached.[5]

[1] Presented by Robert A. Yerburgh, Esq., M.P., 1905.

[2] See ch. 7, § 22.

[3] Presented by Captain Burns Hartopp, M.F.H., 1905.

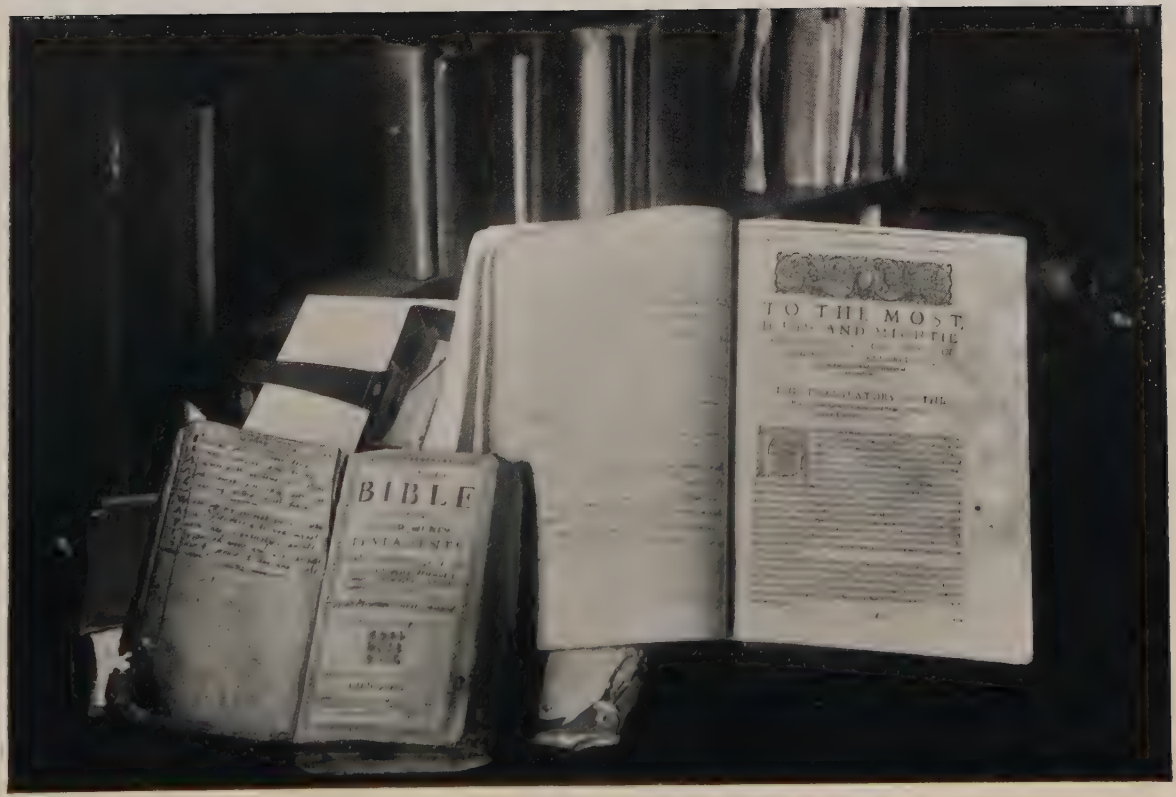
[4] *Watts*. Dark purple gown, shoes brown, book red. *Cross* yellow, leaves dark green.

Mistress Hartopp. Bodice dull blue, sleeves and panniers light buff, dress deep rich brown, side hangings bright green.

Spinning-wheel grey, spaces between the spokes brown, distaff crimson.

Scrolls. Fronts white, backs bright crimson.

[5] Walford's *Greater London*.



WATTS'S BIBLES.

Lent by Miss Izod.

CHAPTER IV

Feb. 1699—18th Mar., 1702

ASSISTANT TO DR. CHAUNCEY

Owing to Dr. Chauncey's dullness in the pulpit and maladroitness out of it, the cause at Mark Lane had for some years been declining. In the autumn of 1698, Watts was invited by the congregation, at the instance apparently of Sir John Hartopp, to become assistant preacher, in place of the Rev. Edward Terry,[1] whose advanced age compelled retirement; and he commenced his new duties in Feb., 1699. In general, Watts officiated in the morning, Dr. Chauncey in the afternoon; and as a result of the change, a torpid cause once more began to exhibit activity. As a pastor, Watts was almost all that could be wished. He was an orator, and his sermons were invariably fresh, thoughtful, and stimulating; indeed, the only complaint the congregation made against him was that they saw too little of him in their homes. The trouble is glanced at in one of his lyrics, in which he says:—

10. Assistant Minister at Mark Lane, Feb., 1699.

[1] See Wilson i. 291, 292.

> "The noisy world complains of me
> That I should shun their sight, and flee
> Visits, and crowds, and company."

Unhappily, he was frequently out of health, and sometimes confined to his room for days by illness.

By this time he had written a number of hymns. Several of his friends urged him to print, but none was so importunate as his brother Enoch, who thus wrote to him in March, 1700: "In your last you discovered an inclination to oblige the world by showing it your hymns in print; and I heartily wish, as well for the satisfaction of the public as myself, that you were something more than inclinable thereunto. I have frequently importuned you to it before now, and your invention has often furnished you with some modest reply to the contrary . . . whoever has the happiness of reading your hymns, will have a very favourable opinion of their author; so that, at the same time you contribute to the universal advantage, you will procure the esteem of men the most judicious and sensible." He urges that there was great need for verses as vigorous and lively as his brother's "to quicken and revive the dying devotion of the age." He passes in review the hymn-writers of the day, and finds in them "a mighty deficiency of that life and soul which is necessary to raise our fancies and fire our passions." In the main Enoch

11. Enoch Watts urges his Brother to Publish. Mar., 1700.

Watts's criticisms are sound; but his reference to the Rev. John Mason, of Water Stratford,[1] who "now reduces this kind of writing to a sort of yawning indifference," is amazingly wide of the mark. Mason, who had been dead six years, though Enoch Watts evidently supposed him to be alive, wrote gloriously and movingly, and he was one of Isaac Watts's most fervent enthusiasms. Moreover to Mason, as we shall see, quite a number of Watts's hymns are indebted for their holy fire. Enoch next points out that Dissenters had lain under a cloud owing to their imagined aversion to poetry, and declares that when his brother's hymns appear these calumnies will vanish. Finally, he urges him to take on the subject the opinion of his friends in London. Enoch Watts meant for the best, but Watts's friends in London—the principal being the leaden-footed, prosaical Dr. Chauncey, and the matter-of-fact Rev. Matthew Clarke,[2] had no more music in their souls—good men as they were—than, to use Watts's own words :—

> "Two old lutes with ne'er a string,
> Or none beside the bass;"[3]

and Watts, with his keen sense of humour, must have laughed heartily at the idea of asking their

[1] He became Vicar of Stantonbury, Bucks, in 1668, and Rector of Water Stratford, Bucks, 1673. He died in 1694, when Watts was 20.

[2] Minister from 1692 to 1726 of the Chapel in Miles's Lane, Cannon Street, near the Monument.

[3] Works vii. 265.

advice. No one knew better than he that without passion there is no genius, and that by genius alone can genius be equitably judged.

12. Sir Thomas Abney. Death of Thomas Gunston. 11th Nov., 1700.

By this time he had become intimate with Sir Thomas Abney and his lady, who then resided at Highgate Hill. Sir Thomas Abney, who early in life had cast in his lot with the Nonconformists, was a power in the city of London. His first wife, Sarah, daughter of the Rev. Joseph Caryl,[1] died in 1698, and in 1700 Sir Thomas married Mary, eldest daughter of Mr. John Gunston.

To Thomas Gunston, Lady Abney's brother, Watts became deeply attached, and he was a frequent visitor at Gunston's home,[2] in Church Street, Stoke Newington, an ancient mansion standing in beautiful grounds. Life through nearly all the persons with whom Watts came largely into contact were men of affluence—the merchant princes of London. Some of his sermons are addressed particularly to the wealthy, as, for example, Sermon 8, delivered at Tunbridge Wells, in which he says, "While I address myself to this assembly, I speak to many persons of this character." Their houses, or rather their palaces, were furnished with elegance. They shone at home and abroad in silks and silver. They had

[1] See p. 36, footnote.

[2] Not to be confused with Newington Manor House, which stood close to the church.

DR. ISAAC WATTS.

LADY HARTOPP.

Memorial Windows in the Chapel at Freeby, near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

"chariots" and horses, "and rich equipage." They were without hauteur or pride. They were not ostentatious. They had great wealth, and they used it wisely, that was all. Their "splendid frugality," to use John Hughes's phrase, was proverbial. Their argosies rode in the Mediterranean or homed from the Brazils; they were powers in Mark Lane and Lombard Street. Among these men the fashionable vices of the day were unknown. There was neither faro table nor dice box in any of their houses. They had no yearning for "deep basset." Watts and Gunston loved to walk and unbend to each other under a row of "reverend elms" that were the glory of the grounds; in the "wilderness," as, according to the custom of the day, the shrubbery was called; or in the trim gardens that crept up to the house with their lordly cedars, their quaint topiary work and their great splashes of colour—green gold, yellow gold and crimson—which were tulips, walks as beautiful "as that sweet grove of Daphne by Orontes." Before them the peacock proudly displayed his "azure, green and gold," and "spread his sweepy train."[1] Most gentlemen's gardens in those days possessed a mound—"a very agreeable piece of elevated ground whence could be surveyed the neighbouring fields and meadows covered with cattle"[2]—and there was a

[1] Works vii. 435.
[2] *Strength and Weakness of Human Reason*, Works iii. p. 97.

very picturesque mound in Mr. Gunston's grounds, a seductive spot that overlooked a sheet of ornamental water and a heronry. Watts was entranced by it, and in later years, as we shall see, when the estate took the name of Abney Park, this mound, "Watts's Mount," as it was afterwards known, became his favourite retreat.[1] Watts indeed, again and again, both in prose and verse, draws his illustrations from lawn, garden and parterre—from the gorgeousnesses of birds and blossoms, and the rich dark shadows of heavily-leaved trees.

In 1700, Mr Gunston[2] took down the old house and erected near its site, and amid its cedars and yews, a trim red-brick, geometrical mansion,[3] crowned with a turret, above which gleamed a gilded ball—"the golden sphere" of Watts's poem on Gunston.

The walls of one of the front rooms upstairs—the Painted Room,[4] as it was called—were embellished with paintings, in gilt mouldings, illustrating Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, one of them, that over the fireplace, being a representation of

[1] It used to be said that this mount was the final resting-place of the remains of Oliver Cromwell. The estate was during the Commonwealth, and afterwards, the property of General Fleetwood, who married Cromwell's daughter Bridget. Whether or not Watts was acquainted with the tradition is unrecorded.

[2] He was engaged, it is said, to Miss Mary Hartopp.

[3] There is in the Free Library, Church Street, Stoke Newington, a large water-colour painting of it by William Beck.

[4] Some writers speak also of a "Grecian Room;" but the Grecian Room and the Painted Room seem to have been the same.

Actæon turned into a stag,[1] with water in the foreground. When the artist was away at dinner, Watts, who had inherited from his grandfather and father some ability with the brush, happening to be in puckish mood, painted on the water a swan, and was amused afterwards by the artist's expression of surprise. A back staircase ascended not only to the upper rooms, but also to the turret, which was a favourite haunt of the two friends. There on a bench they

> "alone would sit,
> Free and secure of all intruding feet,"

and converse on literature, religion, art and science. The house was still unfurnished when its amiable and cultured owner fell ill; and he died on 11th Nov., 1700. The day of the funeral (Nov. 22nd) was black and showery, and the sad ceremony was invested with all the funereal foppery and charnel gloom that the wit of the undertaker could devise. The "lofty" hearse moved slowly to its destination, "weighty sorrow" nodding on each sable plume. The mourners wore modish "lute-string"[2] scarfs. There were, so to speak, acres of black crape. The requisite ghastliness was produced in every face. And thus, with all the chilly pomp supposed to be due to opulence, was poor Gunston borne to his long home among the "raw damps" under old Stoke Newington church.

[1] *Metamorphoses*, Book 3.
[2] A corruption of "lustring."

"In the lonesome vault,
Mindless of Watts and friendship, cold he lies,
Deaf and unthinking clay."

None mourned more sincerely than Watts, who wrote in honour of the departed young man a funeral poem,[1] which he dedicated to Lady Abney. In touching words he recalls the pleasant conversations with his "silver-tongued" friend under the old elm trees, and their last meeting. He walks through the handsome apartments of the newly-finished house, but in spite of the lavishly gilded furniture, the rich upholstery and the superb paintings—what gloom!

"The unhappy house looks desolate and mourns,
And every door groans doleful as it turns;
The pillars languish . . . while vast emptiness
And hollow silence reign through all the place."

As he treads the garden paths the cedars sigh. His glances rest on the "lonesome" turret that crowns the mansion; and apostrophising the house he says:

"O sacred seat,
Sacred to friendship! O divine retreat.
Here did I hope my happy hours to employ,
And fed beforehand on the promised joy.
When weary of the noisy town, my friend,
From mortal cares retiring, should ascend,
And lead me thither."

As for the wilderness, it had become a wilderness indeed. Watts could not then foresee that in Abney House, as the mansion was subsequently

[1] Dated July, 1701 Prefaced by a letter to Lady Abney.

called,[1] he was after all to spend many happy hours, and even years. The poem closes with the reflection that Gunston had exchanged an earthly for a heavenly mansion.

At the time of Gunston's death, the shutters of the Painted Room were not finished, and Watts covered them with emblematical representations, including Death, Time, Strength Destroyed, Life Poured Out, "the Gunston arms in mourning, and the City arms in crape"—Sir Thomas Abney having just been elected Lord Mayor of London. Paintings by Watts of the heads of Democritus, Heraclitus, Aristotle, Alexander, and other old-world heroes are also mentioned by his early biographers. In one of his later books, which is addressed to the young,[2] Watts observes, in reference to Drawing followed by Painting: "Where genius leads the way it is a noble diversion, and improves the mind," revealing an attitude towards art that would have lashed William Blake to absolute fury, and he continued: "Let polite youth . . . have at least some taste of these arts, some capacity of being pleased with a curious draught, a noble painting, an elegant statue, and fine resemblances of nature."

To the west of Abney House, and on a site which is now 126 Church Street, close to Edwards'

[1] Lady Abney inherited the house and most of Gunston's other property.

[2] *A Discourse on the Education of Children and Youth.*

Lane, stood a meeting-house, erected in 1700,[1] which was supported largely by the Abneys[2]—a quaint erection with a high-pitched roof and long blank walls pierced by a few cusp-headed windows. It had a settled minister, but Watts sometimes occupied its pulpit.[3]

On becoming Lord Mayor of London Sir Thomas Abney had appointed Watts his chaplain. In those days no one could take high office unless he was willing to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at a Church of England table, and Sir Thomas, who had no objection to "Occasional Conformity," complied undemurringly with the custom. The procession, which surpassed in pomp and colour all its predecessors, attracted enormous crowds. Before it rode in armour, with a dagger in his hand, a person representing Sir William Walworth, "the head of the rebel Wat Tyler[4] being carried on a pole before him." It probably never occurred to the crowd, who were used to seeing men hanged, drawn and quartered in the public street, and heads rotting on the spikes of Temple Bar, that this gruesome feature was not in the best of taste. What the gentle, refined and liberty-loving Isaac

[1] Its predecessor, the first meeting-house in Stoke Newington, erected in 1662, stood just behind the south gate of what is now Abney Park Cemetery. The 250th Anniversary of the church was celebrated in March, 1912. See *Abney Congregational Church, 1662—1912*, by the present pastor, the Rev. Minos Devine, M.A.

[2] Lady Abney leased it to the church for five shillings a year.

[3] The meeting-house was removed in 1837, when the present Abney Congregational Church was erected.

[4] In wax, one supposes.

Watts thought of it is not recorded. The Muse of History, however, who revels in incongruities, hugged herself with delight when she saw in the forefront of the only Lord Mayor's show in which a Watts participated the hideous sight of the blood-dripping head of a reformer, however misguided, and a champion of an oppressed peasantry. Sir Thomas's action in respect to the sacrament gave the Jacobite party an opportunity for furious invective, and when striking at Sir Thomas they did not omit a passing slash at Watts. Their pamphleteers were of opinion that "Sir Tom" would have been much better employed singing "Psalms at Highgate Hill" and "splitting texts of Scripture with his diminutive figure of a chaplain" than in running the hazard of qualifying himself to be called a handsome man, for riding on horseback before the city train-bands or venturing damnation "to play at longspoon and custard[1] for a transitory twelve-month." Sir Thomas's action also gave offence to many of the Dissenters, including Daniel Defoe, who called it "a-playing at bo-peep with God Almighty."

[1] Custard was a standing dish at the Lord Mayor's feast.

CHAPTER V

18TH MAR., 1702, TO JUNE, 1703

IN SOLE CHARGE OF THE CHURCH IN MARK LANE

13. The Ordination. Mar. 18, 1702.

Dr. Chauncey had at last the wisdom to see that owing to his inability to cope with affairs only one satisfactory course lay before him, that of retirement, and on 15th April, 1701, "to ye great surprize of ye Church" he sent in his resignation. And it was high time, for the membership had dwindled from 171 to 74. The eyes of the worshippers were at once directed towards Watts, but "he objected warmly" and frequently "his indispositions of body" which incapacitated him "from much service," and "pointed often to three Reverend Divines," members of their church, "whose gifts might render them more proper for instruction, and whose age for government;" that is to say, Dr. Chauncey, who, it was thought, might reconsider his decision; the Rev. William Bearman, man of fortune, philanthropist, and at one time assistant minister of the church, and the Rev. Edward Terry. Dr. Chauncey, however, "after many Reasonings and Importunities"[1] declined to continue in office; the Rev.

[1] Church Book. A copy of the only existing portion of this book is preserved in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street.

William Bearman[1] "absolutely refused" on account doubtless of his great age; and Mr. Terry[2] also felt too old for the office. Once more the church turned to Watts, but he in the meantime had again been prostrated by illness. Happily, however, a few months at Bath and Tunbridge Wells gave him new strength, and on his return to town he was "enabled," says the old church book, "to begin his work of preaching amongst us again to our great joy and encouragement." At a meeting held on 14th Jan., 1702, the church "all with one consent" agreed to ask him to be their minister. Particularly the "late Rever'd Pastor Dr. Chauncey, and their Revd. Brother Mr. Terry, who had formerly preached amongst them, encouraged and desired Mr. Watts to accept ye call, and ye Rev. Mr. Bearman heartily profest he had no other objection but Mr. Watts's weakness of Body."

Consequently, God having "removed at last mighty difficulties" out of Watts's way, he acceded to their wishes. This was on 8th March, 1702; and so a King Log gave place to a King David. On that very day, too, the State changed its head; though in that instance calamitously, for the death of King William opened the way for the dull, vacant, and yet mischievous Queen Anne. The great prince whom Watts described as the

[1] For account of him see Wilson, i., 259, 260. He died 7th Oct., 1703.
[2] He died 7th March, 1716.

"scourge of tyrants past," and the "awe of princes yet unborn" was carried in simple style, as he himself would have wished, to Westminster Abbey. While these events were still fresh in men's minds arrangements were afoot for Watts's ordination; which took place on March 18th,[1] among the ministers present being Thomas Rowe (Watts's tutor at Stoke Newington Academy), Benoni Rowe[2] (pastor at Fetter Lane), Matthew Clarke[3] (pastor at Miles Lane), John Collins,[4] Junior (co-pastor with Robert Bragg,[5] in Lime Street, Paved Alley), and Thomas Ridgley[6] (pastor of the church in Upper Thames Street). The proceedings commenced with prayer by Matthew Clarke, and when Mr. William Pickard,[7] one of the deacons, enquired whether the church approved of the choice of Watts as their minister, the reply was a unanimous affirmative. Watts having declared "publickly and solemnly his consent" to undertake the duties of pastor, and prayer having been offered by Mr. Collins, a sermon was preached by

[1] The Rev. T. G. Crippen writes to me, "It curiously illustrates a phase of opinion among the 'Old Dissenters,' of which no modern writer that I know of takes much notice, that from the formal resignation of Dr. Chauncey on 15th April, 1701 to the Ordination of Watts on 18th March, 1702, the Lord's Supper was never celebrated at Mark Lane, though there were in the church three retired ministers. It was thought that no one but the actual pastor was competent to administer the sacrament."

[2] He was Thomas Rowe's brother. See *Bunhill Memorials*, p. 247, Wilson iii., 449. His son Thomas married Miss Singer.

[3] Bogue and Bennett, iii. 435, Wilson i. 474.

[4] Wilson i., 240.

[5] *Bunhill Memorials*, p. 15, Ivimey i. 249, Wilson i. 241.

[6] *Bunhill Memorials*, p. 230, Wilson ii. 72, iv. 267.

[7] The Pickard and Abney families intermarried. See chapter 16, § 66. Some of the Pickards are buried in Cheshunt Church.

Thomas Rowe from Jer. iii. 15: "And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."[1]

After the sermon, "Mr. Benoni Rowe further carried on ye work of prayer. Mr. Thos. Ridgley followed; and Mr. Watts, as entering upon his office, finished ye duties of ye day with Prayer, Singing, and ye blessing."

"On March ye 29th," continues the Church Book, "Our Pastor admrd ye Lord's Supper amongst us, having preached ye foregoing Thursday a preparatory Sermon from 1 Cor. 10, 17; wherein he shewed how much our communion with each other as well as with Christ was set forth and sealed in this great Ordinance, designing to unite all ye hearts and affections of ye church to each other, yt ye day of Communion might be as a new Covenant with ye Lord and with each other also. We finished ye celebration of ye Lord's Supper by singing a Gospel Hymn suitable to ye Ordinance, taken from Rev. 1st 5, 6, 7, with one heart and one voyce, to ye glory of our Redeemer and our great consolation and joy." This, doubtless, as the Rev. T. G. Crippen suggests, was Hymn 61 in Watts's 1st Book, at that time unpublished—the first verse of which runs:

> "Now to the Lord, that makes us know
> The wonders of His dying love,

[1] An epitome of the sermon is in the fragment of the Church Book preserved at the Memorial Hall.

Be humble honours paid below
And strains of nobler praise above."

Soon after his ordination Watts presented an oil painting of himself to his old tutor, the Rev. John Pinhorne, and it is now preserved in the Above Bar Church, Southampton.

Watts was continuously anxious that his people should look upon the place of worship not as his but as theirs—their very own; and in his rendering of the 23rd Psalm he thus words the idea:

"There would I find a settled rest
(While others go and come),
No more a stranger or a guest,
But like a child at home."

Of Queen Anne the Dissenters had even extravagant hopes, and Watts, in one of his sermons went so far as to apply to her the eulogium on Jael in Judges v. 24, 26, altering it to "Blessed above women shall Anne our sovereign be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent or on the throne. She puts her hand to the work of reformation;" little supposing when he used these words that the wretched woman was looking out of the corners of her eyes towards Rome, and that her dearest wish was to pass on the crown to the line of the Pretender!

14. Self-Civil War. 1702.

Watts seems to have resided with Sir John Hartopp till 1702. In any case he removed that year "by slow degrees" from Newington to the house of

Mr. Thomas Hollis,[1] in the Minories, principally in order to be near the chapel in Mark Lane. In this house he had a "technophyon" or "secret chamber" at his command whither he could "retire from the world and converse with God and his own heart;" holding to the belief that a room of this kind is "a most considerable advantage for improvement in godliness."[2] Here he daily examined himself, probing the depths of his soul. Here he prayed and wept. Here he drew down his strength. "Abandon the secret chamber," he says, "and the spiritual life will decay." He could say with his contemporary, Kit Smart, "Strong is the lion, strong the gier eagle, strong the whale, but stronger is the man of prayer." Reference has already been made to his love for the Berkshire poet and translator, Joshua Sylvester. He admired in particular those two stimulating poems, "The Map of Man,"[3] translated by Sylvester from the Latin of the Rev. Henry Smith,[4] and "Self Civil War,"[5] translated from the Latin of "Master George Goodwin," both of which he may have read in the folio edition of 1641, in which they are bound up with Sylvester's rendering of Du Bartas's *Divine Weeks and Works*. It is prob-

[1] Thomas Hollis died in 1718. His funeral sermon, preached by Dr. Jeremiah Hunt, was printed. Hollis's son Thomas was a munificent benefactor to Harvard College, Massachusetts.

[2] Works iv., 95.

[3] Sylvester's Works, folio ed., 1641, p. 403.

[4] Puritan divine, 1550—1591.

[5] Sylvester's Works, p. 565.

able that Watts on his knees in the "technophyon" at Mr. Hollis's often repeated the very words of the "Self Civil War."

> "O sacred Sp'rit, my sp'rit's assistant be;
> And in This Conflict make Mee conquer Mee."

When lodging in the Minories Watts would reach his chapel by threading John Street (where he would cross the old Roman wall that once surrounded London), Crutched Friars and Hart Street, passing St. Olave's Church, and "Whittington's Palace," both of which must have been familiar objects to his eyes.

Watts's congregation appreciated his labours; and its numbers continued to increase. When on account of his ailments he was unable to take a service it was his custom to send a pastoral letter, and these writings are as beautiful as his character which they faithfully mirror. No better letters of the kind, indeed, had passed from hand to hand since Peter communicated with the "strangers scattered throughout Pontus;" and Paul, a prisoner, despatched from Rome his final greetings to those who loved him "in the faith."

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON N.W.

CHAPTER VI

JUNE, 1703—JULY, 1707

"THERE IS A LAND OF PURE DELIGHT"

In 1703 Watts was again visited by a long and alarming illness, and the church with a view to lightening his duties, appointed him an assistant in the person of the Rev. Samuel Price ;[1] a modest, gentle, kind-hearted, but occasionally indiscreet minister, who won the confidence of Watts, and worked with him harmoniously. Finding that he could not be a great man, Price aimed at something higher, namely, to be a good man, and he succeeded. And yet he is not forgotten. Watts loved him, and Watts's love was immortality.

15. Rev. Samuel Price. 1703.

In August, 1703, Watts being again out of health paid another visit to Tunbridge Wells, and after his return, finding it impossible to continue his literary labours without assistance, he hired as an amanuensis a lad named Joseph Brandley, who eighteen months later was succeeded by another lad, Edward Hitchin.

Of Watts's friendships at this time, the most important was that with his old college companion,

[1] He became co-pastor with Watts in 1713.

the gifted and shrewd John Shute, afterwards Lord Barrington,[1] who worshipped in Mark Lane, and had written forcibly in the Dissenting interest. Shute was a friend of Locke; and Watts apostrophising him during Locke's illness, bade him "wait the prophet's flight," and seize the falling mantle.[2] Another particular friend of Watts was the Amazonion Bridget Bendish,[3] eldest daughter of General Ireton, and grand-daughter of Oliver Cromwell. To Bridget Bendish who gloried in her descent from the Protector, and who was, indeed, an Oliver Cromwell in petticoats, Watts addressed a poem, "Against Tears," though nobody, it is to be supposed, was less addicted to weeping. Occasionally Watts came into touch with Richard Cromwell, who under the name of Clarke, resided at Cheshunt,[4] and was a member of John Howe's church in Silver Street. Watts recalled him as a white-haired old man with a polished and insinuating address, and observes, "I never heard him glance at his former station but once, and that in a very distant manner." In Jan. died the oldest member of the Mark Lane Church, Mrs. John Owen, widow of the Rev. Dr. John Owen; and the event carried men's

[1] Created 1720.

[2] Locke died 28th Oct., 1704, and Watts wrote three poems on the occasion.

[3] She was a member of the church in Mark Lane. She died in July, 1726.

[4] Pengelly House was built on its site. Richard Cromwell died in July, 1712.

ALL HALLOWS STAINING.

On the tower, the only part now remaining, it is proposed to place a memorial to Dr. Watts.

ST. OLAVE'S CHURCH, HART STREET,

Viewed from the North-East, 1906.

THE CHURCHYARD IN SEETHING LANE (on the left)

THE RECTORY IN HART STREET (on the right)

ST. OLAVE'S, HART STREET.

minds back to the period of the Laudian persecution and to the days of the Protector. With his relations at Southampton, Watts was constantly in communication, and one of his letters (partly in prose and partly in verse), to his sisters Sarah and Mary[1]—has been preserved.

16. At Pinners' Hall, June, 1704. "Horæ Lyricæ," 1705.

The chapel in Mark Lane having become dilapidated,[2] Watts's congregation removed in June, 1704, to Pinners' Hall, Old Broad Street. Pinners' Hall, which adjoined Winchester House, the mansion of the Paulets, Marquises of Winchester, was erected by the Pinmakers' or Pinners' Company in 1636, upon land obtained on lease from Sir Christopher Clitherow, who the previous year had been Lord Mayor of London. The guild having languished, they about 1662 let the building to a Society of Independents. In 1672 was founded the famous Merchants' Lecture, preached on a Tuesday morning by prominent Independent and Presbyterian divines, but in 1694 the Presbyterians who had discontinued taking part in it, established a lecture elsewhere. Pinners' Hall was remodelled[3] by the Independents in 1677, just before the pastorate of the Rev.

[1] See Milner, p. 225. Mary died 4th Mar., 1715, æt. 31.

[2] The chapel in Mark Lane once more became a dwelling-house, and was occupied by a Dr. Clark. It is referred to in Watts's Church Book, under date 1723, as "Dr. Clark's house [i.e., Ye House that afterwards was his] in Mark Lane." See *Transactions, Congregational History Society*.

[3] The Hall was pulled down in 1799.

Richard Wavel, and furnished with a peculiarly shaped roof and six galleries "or two tiers, one raised above the other." As Mr. Wavel's congregation occupied the chapel only on a Sunday morning, the building was let out for the afternoon to various other congregations. Dr. John Singleton's people had it for some time, and at Midsummer, 1704, when Singleton's church removed to Lorimers' Hall, Watts's congregation took their place.

On 2nd April, 1705, died John Howe, who was interred in the parish church of All Hallows, Bread Street.[1] Watts used to say that there was one passage in Howe's writings which he often read with ecstatic pleasure, and felt that he could always be reading—that passage in which are portrayed the joys in store for us "when death shall have discumbered and set us free from all sorts of distempers, and brought us into the state of perfect and perfected spirits," and when "all shall be full of divine life, light, love and joy, and all freely communicate as they have received freely."[2] Howe was succeeded at Silver Street by the Rev. John Spademan and his co-worker, the Rev. Samuel Rosewell, who became one of Watts's dearest friends.

As we have noticed, Watts had at various times

[1] The church in which Milton was baptised. It was demolished previous to 1878. See Cassell's *Old and New London*, i. 349.

[2] Howe's sermon on the death of Dr. Bates. See Watts's Works, ii. 545.

written quite a number of poems, and he at last decided to issue them with the title of *Horæ Lyricæ*. The volume appeared in 1705. In his preface, which savours of Sylvester,[1] he deplores the fact that the art of verse which was first consecrated to the service of God should so often —(and here he glances at Dryden, Etheredge, and others) have been prostituted to the vilest purposes, to give gay colours to temptation, and gild over the foulest images of iniquity; and he tells us that his aim in publishing the book was to remove this reproach and to restore poetry to its highest and noblest use. This, indeed, was his aim all through life. He loved, for example, to take heathen poems and to give them a Christian tone—to make the very dragons cease from their hissings and praise their Maker with their forky tongues. He insisted on the importance of using sparkling images and magnificent expressions. The Prophets, he says, should "be read incessantly, for their writings are an abundant source of all the riches and ornaments of speech," and this he considers far better counsel than that of Horace,[2] who bade those who would excel in poetry, study night and day the Greek models.

Horæ Lyricæ consists of occasional pieces and hymns. The former, exhibiting as they do, Watts's

[1] See "The Soule's Errand," Sylvester's Works, p. 652. Sylvester in his poem, "Urania," deplores "The Profanation of the Muses"—Sylvester's Works, p. 242.

[2] *Art of Poetry*, lines 268—9.

predilection for Pindar and Casimire, are valueless except autobiographically; the latter are the handsel[1] of one of the most glorious gifts that an Englishman has bestowed upon his race. Watts had at last found himself when he burst forth magnificently:—

"Eternal power! whose high abode
Becomes the grandeur of a God;
Infinite length beyond the bounds
Where stars revolve their little rounds.

The lowest step around Thy seat,
Rises too high for Gabriel's feet,
In vain the tall arch-angel tries
To reach Thine height with wond'ring eyes.

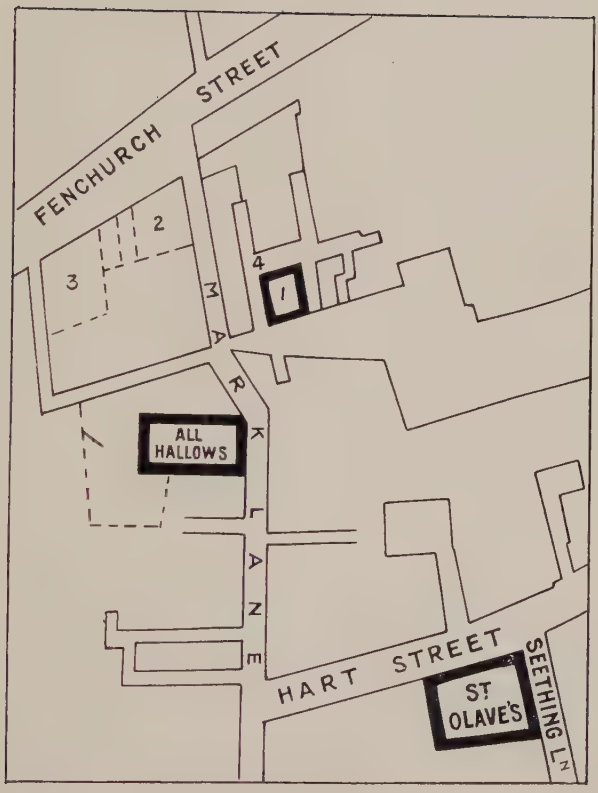
Thy dazzling beauties whilst he sings,
He hides his face behind his wings;
And ranks of shining thrones around
Fall worshipping and spread the ground.

Lord, what shall earth and ashes do?
We would adore our Maker too;
From sin and dust to Thee we cry,
The Great, the Holy, and the High!

Earth from afar has heard Thy fame,
And worms have learnt to lisp Thy name;
But O, the glories of Thy mind
Leave all our soaring thoughts behind."

There the hymn should have ended, for the conclusion is both weak and unnecessary. That the lines are unequal in merit, and that there is a

[1] Watts's Hymns are scattered in the pages of as many as seven different works:—(1) Horæ Lyricæ, 1706, 2nd ed. 1709; (2) Hymns, 1707, 2nd ed. 1709; (3) Divine and Moral Songs, 1715; (4) Psalms, 1719; (5) Sermons, 1721—27: (6) Reliquiæ Juveniles, 1734; (7) Remnants of Time, 1736.



MARK LANE, &c.

Chiefly from Ogilby and Morgan's Map of London, 1677.

1. Probable site of Watts's Chapel.
2. The Magpie and Horseshoe Tavern. } Now The
3. The King's Head Tavern. } London Tavern.
4. Blanchapelton Court.

suspicion of grotesqueness in the second verse must be conceded. Unfortunately, all attempts to remove this blemish have achieved only doubtful success; but a writer may yet come forward who will in a God-sent moment provide the few touches which would make this hymn one of the best in the language. The outburst, "Keep silence, all created things," was once popular, owing chiefly to the verses:—

> "Not Gabriel asks the reason why,
> Nor God the reason gives;
> Nor dares the favourite angel pry
> Between the folded leaves.
>
> My God, I never longed to see
> My fate with curious eyes,
> What gloomy lines are writ for me,
> Or what bright scenes shall rise."[1]

Other hymns in the volume are, "Father, how wide Thy glory shines,"[2] and "Eternal Wisdom, Thee we praise.[3] The appalling sapphics entitled, "The Day of Judgment,"[4] stand by themselves.[5] The book excited curiosity, for it was something new for a poet to be a Christian, and the first edition was soon exhausted.

17. A Visit to Southampton, May, 1706.

Among Watts's memoranda occurs the entry, "Went to South[amp]ton, 18th May, 1706; returned again with but small recruit of health July 5th." Possibly that seraphic rapture, "There is a land

[1] Works vii. 224. [2] vii. 225. [3] vii. 232. [4] vii. 237.
[5] A second edition appeared in 1709. There were many editions subsequently.

of pure delight," was written during this visit. According to tradition it came upon him one summer day while he was gazing across the gulf-river, Southampton Water; and the pleasant meadows near Netley are said to have suggested the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood." That the hymn was produced about this time is certain. It cannot be assigned to an earlier date, for it is one of Watts's most perfect productions, and the work of no prentice hand. Then, too, it must have been written in the summer, and at a time when its author was out of health, and probably often in pain. And lastly, its subject is that of the passage in Howe's sermon lately cited, which Watts had so often read with rapture, and felt that he could always be reading. Into how fine an ecstasy was his soul wrapped at that memorable moment! What fire was there, yet what perfect composure! for one knows not which is the more impressive, the passion or the holy calm of these flawless lines:—

"There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers:
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dress'd in living green:

So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan roll'd between.

But timorous mortals start and shrink
To cross this narrow sea;
And linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away.

Oh! could we make our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With unbeclouded eyes!

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er.
Not Jordan's stream, not death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore."

"There are some of us," says the Rev. J. Brierley [J. B.], "who can never look upon a green field with the spring seen on it without this hymn coming to us as a whisper from heaven."

The contemplation of Southampton Water probably suggested the following lines[1] also:—

"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.

Let cares, like a wild deluge, come
And storms of sorrow fall;
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all!

There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

[1] Hymns, Book 2, No. 65.

18. Miss Elizabeth Singer. 1706.

There now entered into Watts's life the beautiful and accomplished Miss Elizabeth Singer. Her father who, like the elder Watts, had been imprisoned for Nonconformity, resided near Frome, but he and his family were frequently in London; and they were connected by kin or friendship with several persons of rank and figure. The Hon. Henry Thynne, son of Lord Weymouth, taught her French and Italian, and Mr. Thynne's daughter, Frances, Countess of Hertford, afterwards Duchess of Somerset,[1] a lady who had "all the sweetness of temper that ever any human being could boast," was her life-long friend. Miss Singer paraphrased at the request of Bishop Ken, the 38th chapter of Job. Her favourite book, which was the favourite also of her friend Lady Hertford, was that fine old folio of Sylvester to which we referred as a volume dear to Watts. Lady Hertford, indeed, took to herself the pen name of Eusebia [Piety], from one of the characters in Sylvester's "Panaretus,"[2] and it is under this name that she figures in Watts's works. Miss Singer, who was of middle stature and just Watts's age, had fine auburn hair, vermilion lips, and dark blue eyes that sparkled with animation. Her complexion was very fair, and a "lovely blush" glowed in

[1] Her husband, Algernon, Earl of Hertford, became in 1748 7th Duke of Somerset. Their homes were Percy Lodge, Colnbrook, Bucks, and The Hermitage, St. Leonard's Hill, Windsor. They also had a seat at Marlborough. They were married in 1713.

[2] Sylvester's Works, folio, p. 431.

her cheeks. She moved with grace, and her voice was "harmoniously sweet." She was fond of "sticking flowers in her hair." Her fan, decorated with an exquisite painting of Venus in her chariot drawn by sparrows, wrought havoc in susceptible hearts. In short, she was a danger to the public, and as such became one of the toasts of the day. Of the portraits that have come down to us, the one that gives the best idea of her haunting beauty is that which we have reproduced. To the charm of her mind her writings bear ample testimony, for she was not only a poem but also a poet—publishing verse above the pen name of Philomela (the Nightingale). Among the aspirants for her hand was Matthew Prior, and her lines on "Love and Friendship," drew from the inflammable lyrist a shoal of compliments on the witchery both of her person and muse. Her inclinations, however, were not for Prior but for Watts. She had read his *Horæ Lyricæ* with delight, and straightway fell hotly in love with him, though they had never met; just as the prince in the *Arabian Nights* fell hotly in love with a lady of whom he had seen only a portrait. A line of poetry had succeeded where a dozen gallants had failed. In her enthusiasm—and she was ardent in everything—she directed to Watts some glowing lines beginning :—

"To murmuring streams, in tender strains
My pensive muse no more
Of love's enchanting force complains
Along the flow'ry shore."

She tells him that, enchanted by his verse, her thoughts no longer occupy themselves with her old admirers :—

"No more Mirtello's fatal face
My quiet breast alarms ;
His eyes, his air, and youthful grace,
Have lost their usual charms.

No gay Alexis in the grove
Shall be my future theme :
I burn with an immortal love,
And sing a purer flame.

Seraphic heights I seem to gain ;
And sacred transports feel,
While Watts, to thy celestial strain
Surprised I listen still."

These lines are dated July, 1706. She longed to see the author, whom she seems to have pictured as a fine handsome man with hair like palest amber hanging in floating curls and shining waves. That at any rate was her ideal as expressed in her prose rhapsodies and her poem on Joseph. Her wish was at last gratified. But before her stood not an Antinous or an Adonis, not even a moderately presentable Englishman, but a minute, sallow-faced anatomy with hook-nose, prominent cheekbones, heavy countenance, cadaverous complexion and small eyes, which, however, when he gazed upon her, filled with sparkles. Her heart sank within her ; and Watts's heart must have sunk too, for no man was better skilled than he in reading the thoughts of others. But if, on account of his plainness, she at first recoiled from

him, the variety and charm of his conversation swiftly compensated for her disappointment, and she congratulated herself on having made the acquaintance of a man whose friendship would be as precious to her as his love was distasteful. The sight of Miss Singer, however,—of "the tangles of Amira's hair"[1]—revived in Watts those tender feelings which he had supposed would never again disturb him; and he could not prevent amatory lines from appearing in his poems. "Perhaps," he wrote in the preface of the 2nd edition of *Horæ Lyricæ*, "there are some morose readers that stand ready to condemn every line that is written upon the theme of love; but have we not the cares and the felicities of that sort of social life represented to us in the sacred writings? Is it utterly unworthy of a serious character to write on this argument, because it has been unhappily polluted by some scurrilous pens?"[2] Miss Singer showed Watts some of her unpublished poems, and he, reading them with the biassed mind of an admirer, addressed to her on 19th July, 1706, a lyric on the sight of some of her divine poems never printed, in which he styles her "a fair angel," and concludes:—

"Let all my powers with awe profound
While Philomela sings
Attend the rapture of the sound,
And my devotion rise on her seraphic wings;"[3]

[1] Works vii., 248. [2] Works, vii., p. 216. [3] Works vii., 284.

In the Sum Book, alluded to early in this work—a book which Watts himself must often have perused, and which he at this time or subsequently possessed—occurs a verse in Latin with the following translation :—

> "Two arrowes Cupid from his Quiver drew
> One provèd false to Love, ye other true.
> That tends to Love was fixt with golden head
> That Love repulst was blunt and tipd with Lead."

Miss Singer, as it proved, had been hit with the blunt arrow; consequently when at last Watts summed up sufficient courage to propose to her, which he did, she declined him, though in her sweetest manner, adding, not very felicitously, if with the best of intentions, "Mr. Watts, I only wish I could say that I admire the casket as much as I admire the jewel."

Prior, who was also repulsed, bemoaned his unhappy fate in plaintive verse; and, ceasing to be a lover, ceased as far as she was concerned to be anything. Watts, however, accepted the situation with sweetness and amiability, and as he could not, in the phrase of the day, be her servant he was content to be her friend. The wounds inflicted by Cupid generally rankle a little, and tradition will have it that Watts's disappointment was responsible for the suspicion of pique in Hymn 48, Book 2, which is entitled, "Love to the creatures dangerous":

> "How vain are all things here below!
> How false, and yet how fair!

Donawell delin. *T. Bowles Sculp.*

FENCHURCH STREET IN THE TIME OF WATTS.

From a coloured print lent by Mr. D. A. Ross.

On the left is the old King's Head with signboard, on the right Ironmongers' Hall.

Each pleasure hath its poison too
And every sweet a snare."

It is unlikely, however, that Watts was a very ardent lover. In any case the wounds healed quickly and beautifully, and his subsequent friendship for Miss Singer proved to be one of the most pleasing episodes in his career.

CHAPTER VII

JULY, 1707—1709

HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

19. By the Sick Bed of Matthew Clarke, 1707.

In the spring of 1707 Watts's friend, the Rev. Matthew Clarke, fell with a malignant fever — the "whole mass" of his blood being "corrupted, and the pores of his body dried up." The congregation of Miles's Lane, appointed in their distress seasons for public intercession for him, and the services, which were conducted by Watts and other ministers, continued for nine days. Abandoning all hope of recovery, Clarke settled his worldly affairs, took a solemn leave of his wife, and resigned himself in humble devotion to the will of God. Watts, whom he had sent for to pray with him, assisted him in his devotions, and recommended him, as a dying man, to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although, however, life hung by a thread, the physicians did not relax their exertions, and as a last resource they prescribed "a rich cordial to be taken in a very large quantity." The effect was sudden and marvellous. To the joy of his friends he, like Hezekiah, rose miraculously from his bed of sickness;

moreover, as was the case with Hezekiah too, many years were added to his life; and upon his re-appearance in public his church appointed a day [23rd April, 1707] of solemn thanksgiving to God.[1]

20. "Come, let us join our cheerful songs."

While Clarke was recuperating, Watts was preparing for the press his famous volume, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in three books, with an essay, "Towards the Improvement of Christian Psalmody," &c. The work was printed by John Humphreys, and sold by John Lawrence ("At the Angel, Poultry"), who had purchased the copyright for £10.[2] In the first edition Book 1 has 78 hymns [Nos. 1 to 78 of the later editions.] Book 2, 110 [Nos. 1 to 110 of the later editions.] Book 3, 22 [Nos. 1 to 22 of the later editions], followed by 12 doxologies [Nos. 26 to 37 in later editions]. As the original numbering is retained in all editions, it becomes a simple matter to trace the hymns that were subsequently added. The following Table gives at a glance the number of hymns in the 1st and subsequent editions.

	Book 1.	*Book 2.*	*Book 3.*	*Doxologies.*
1st edition	78	110	22	12
2nd and subsequent editions	150	170	25	20

In an admirable preface Watts mentions the shortcomings of the majority of his predecessors

[1] Clarke died 27th March, 1726. Watts wrote a Latin inscription for his monument.

[2] Memoir in Burder's edition of Watts's Works, Vol. 1, p. xvii.

in hymnody, sets down his own aims, and gives a general account of his work. He says, "While we sing the praises of God in His Church we are employed in that part of worship which of all others is nearest akin to heaven; and it is a pity that this should be performed the worst upon earth. . . . To see the dull indifference, the neglect and the thoughtless air that sits upon the faces of a whole assembly while the Psalm is on their lips, might tempt even a charitable observer to suspect the fervency of inward religion." Some of his predecessor's "songs," he says, "are almost opposite to the spirit of the Gospel; many of them foreign to the state of the New Testament. . . . Many ministers and private Christians have long groaned under this inconvenience. . . . At their importunate and repeated requests I have for some years devoted many hours of leisure to this service."

The work opens with that "grand and noble ode"[1] already given, "Behold the glories of the Lamb"; Hymn 5 contains the oft-quoted verse:

> "'Tis God that lifts our comforts high,
> Or sinks them in the grave;
> He gives, and (blessed be His name!)
> He takes but what He gave."

As regards Hymn 15, the true lover of Watts will dwell only upon the first three exquisite verses, which are in themselves a complete poem:

[1] Judge Willis.

PINNERS' HALL, LONDON.

From a photograph supplied by Mr. W. A. Cater, F.R.Hist.S.

Here Isaac Watts preached from June, 1704, to October, 1708.

LIBRARY ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

"Let me but hear my Saviour say,
'Strength shall be equal to the day;'
Then I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all-sufficient grace.

I glory in infirmity,
That Christ's own power may rest on me,
When I am weak, then am I strong,
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song.

I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains
While His left hand my head sustains."

No. 18 is the fine outburst beginning, "Hear what the voice from heaven proclaims;" No. 41 the Martyrs' Hymn, "These glorious minds how bright they shine." The latter, after undergoing various changes at the hands of hymnal-compilers is now best known by the admirable cento in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 438, "How bright these glorious spirits shine!" which derives all its ideas from Watts, and breathes from beginning to end his beauteous spirit, although only two of his lines—the first and third—are unaltered. A great favourite with our forefathers was No. 48, "Awake our souls, away our fears," with its haunting second verse:—

"True 'tis a strait and thorny road,
And mortal spirits tire and faint,
But they forget the mighty God
That feeds the strength of every saint."

An amusing reference to this hymn was once made by Robert Hall. A wealthy friend was

showing him his grounds—here a smoothly shaven lawn, there a tinkling stream, here a flower bed gay with gorgeous blossoms, there an ample path by a fountain scattering silver spray. Turning to his friend, Hall enquired :—

> "Is this the 'strait and thorny road'
> That leads us to the mount of God?"

Hymn 62 is that glorious flight of thought which seems to carry us clean out of this earth into the presence of the Four and Twenty Elders—into the very presence of Jehovah Himself :—

> "Come let us join our cheerful songs
> With angels round the throne;
> Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
> But all their joys are one.
>
> 'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,
> 'To be exalted thus:'
> 'Worthy the Lamb,' our lips reply,
> For He was slain for us.
>
> Jesus is worthy to receive
> Honour and power divine;
> And blessings more than we can give,
> Be, Lord, for ever Thine.
>
> Let all that dwell above the sky,
> And air, and earth, and seas,
> Conspire to lift Thy glories high,
> And speak Thine endless praise.
>
> The whole creation join in one
> To bless the sacred name
> Of Him that sits upon the throne,
> And to adore the Lamb."

Hymn 74 opens with the frequently quoted (sometimes with approval, sometimes with disapproval) :

"We are a garden wall'd around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground;
A little spot enclosed by grace
Out of the world's wild wilderness."

The Hymns of Book 2 are deeply experimental, and some of them deal with the frailty of human life and the solemnities of death and eternity. No 2 has that tremendous opening:

21. "Come, we that love the Lord."

"My thoughts on awful subjects roll—
Damnation and the dead."

No 9 is the affecting "Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?" No. 23 the magnificent "Descend from heaven, Immortal Dove." How grandly sounded the last in old times when from church or chapel gallery it was rolled forth to the crash of trombone, serpent, cornopean, horse's leg, bassoon, double-bass and other instruments with fearsome shapes and grotesque names! and especially the verse:

"Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll,
Where solid pleasures never die
And fruits immortal feast the soul."

The very pews used to vibrate with the fervour, and the candles which stood up from the little round holes in the pew tops would gutter alarmingly and sometimes even blow out. While singing it the feeling asserts itself that religion is the one thing, and that all else is only vanity, delusion and dust. Hymn 20, the blessed song on "Heavenly

joys on earth," contains many of his "tallest thoughts."[1]

"Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.

The sorrows of the mind
Be banished from the place:
Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less.

Let those refuse to sing
That never knew our God,
But favourites of the heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad.

The God that rules on high,
And thunders when He please,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas,

This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love:
He shall send down His heavenly powers
To carry us above.

There shall we see His face,
And never, never sin;
There from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.

Yes, and before we rise
To that immortal state,
The thoughts of such amazing bliss
Should constant joys create.

The men of grace have found
Glory begun below:
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.

[1] Watts's expression. Sermon 12.

The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're marching through Immanuel's ground
To fairer worlds on high."

Such hymns act upon one like the study of astronomy. They give the feeling of eternity. No. 34 is the beautiful "Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove." From the terrible 44 one passes to 54, "My God, the spring of all my joys," and then to 60, "Praise, everlasting praise, be paid," or rather to its balanced yet inspiriting and glowing conclusion:

"Oh for a strong, a lasting faith
To credit what my Maker saith!
T'embrace the message of His Son
And call the joys of heaven our own.

Then should the earth's old pillars shake,
And all the wheels of nature break,
Our steady souls should fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar.

Our everlasting hopes arise
Above the ruinable skies
Where the eternal Builder reigns
And His own courts His power sustains."

The next important hymn is that priceless chrysolite, without flaw or fault, which we have already considered, No. 66,

"There is a land of pure delight."

No. 67, "Great God! how infinite art Thou," contains the verses:

"Thy throne eternal ages stood
Ere seas or stars were made;
Thou art the ever-living God
Were all the nations dead.

Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
And vex'd with trifling cares;
While Thine eternal thought moves on
Thine undisturbed affairs."

No. 69 is the splendid "Begin, my tongue, some heavenly theme," which contains the deathless lines:

"Engraved as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines;
Nor can the powers of darkness raze
Those everlasting lines.

His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;
The Voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises."

No. 77 is "Stand up, my soul, shake off thy fears," and No. 79, "Plunged in a gulf of deep despair": which would be saved from oblivion by its sixth verse alone:

"Oh for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak."

22. "When I survey the wondrous cross."

Book 3, "Prepared for the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper," contains the most passionate product of his genius, No. 7, "When I survey the wondrous cross," a hymn which in many books is given only in a mutilated form. It came hot from Watts's pen as follows:

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingling down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

In order that a disgusted public may judge how they have been defrauded by the compilers of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, let me point out that in verse 5 "present" is changed to "offering," the splendid fourth verse is omitted, and the hymn is made to conclude with "the poor and inharmonious"[1]:

"To Christ, who won for sinners grace
By bitter grief and anguish sore,
Be praise from all the ransom'd race
For ever and for ever more."

It is the old, old story of meddlesome incapacity

[1] Judge Willis.

endeavouring to improve on genius—the man who writes with a burnt stick correcting the man who writes with a pen of fire.

I have pointed out the merits of Watts's verse. His chief fault is the grotesqueness already censured which here and there invades a hymn; while at times the lines descend into mere prose. Happily, however, these faults do not occur in the best hymns; and those which deface others may be eliminated without much difficulty. No one understood the inequalities of his work better than Watts himself. He says: "As there have been occasions heretofore when I have wished to write but the imagination has refused to attend the wish; so there are seasons when the verse comes almost without a call and the will might resist in vain."[1]

The extraordinary helpfulness of Watts's hymns is attributable chiefly to the fact that they are a faithful record of soul experience—the soul experience of him who wrestled with God in the "technophyon" at Mr. Hollis's, in the vestry at Mark Lane, and during his rambles by the waterside at Southampton. A diary of daily actions is dull reading, but when a man writes the diary of his soul, when that man is a Watts, and when his utterances are blazoned in deathless verse, the heart leaps, the responsive and soaring soul has all its work to keep back its tears, and the mouth is

[1] Works iii. 382.

filled with laughter, which is laughter indeed. Some men hunger for gold, others for honours. That is the man of men whose chief end in life is to express himself; but ten thousand times the man of men is he who while expressing himself succeeds in strengthening the faith of those who come under his quickening influence. Compared with such a man Crœsus was a cave dweller, Midas a beggar in rags. And who shall say that Watts did not arrive at this height of heights? "I pity," he once said, "the man of lively imagination who is devoid of sanctifying grace."[1]

23. The Influence of John Mason.

Earlier in this work, I referred to Watts's enthusiasm for, and his indebtedness to, John Mason, who deserves rather than any other writer the name of the Father of the Modern Hymn. If there had not been a Mason there would never have been a Watts. One is to the other indeed something what Plutarch is to Shakespeare. The influence of Mason appears at every turn. For example, Book 1, No. 46, "Awake, my zeal, awake, my love," springs from Mason's No. 12:

> "Away dark thoughts; awake, my joy,
> Awake, my glory, sing."

Book 1, No. 61, "Now to the Lord that makes us know," is founded on Mason's Nos. 30 and 33; Book 1, No. 62, "Come, let us join our cheerful

[1] Sermon 8.

songs," is deeply indebted to Mason's Nos. 14 and 33. Mason's No. 14 begins:

"Oh that I had an angel's tongue
That I might loudly sing;"

and it contains the line:

"Come, let us join with angels then."

Verse 3 of Mason's No. 33, begins:

"The Lamb is worthy that was slain.

Book 1, No. 7,

"Dread Sovereign! let my evening song
Like holy incense rise,
Assist the offerings of my tongue
To reach the lofty skies,"

would scarcely have been written but for the opening lines of Mason's lovely No. 9,

"Now from the altar of my heart
Let incense flames arise,
Assist me, Lord, to offer up
Mine evening sacrifice."

Mason, indeed, was a mine in which not only Watts but also Charles Wesley, Joseph Hart, and many others wisely and industriously delved. Nineteenth and twentieth century writers have lost sight of Mason, hence, in a large measure, their hopeless inferiority. If we would excel we must turn as our fathers did to the best models.

Watts's hymns met at first with a mixed reception. Some churches tabooed them, not because they objected to Watts's lines, but because they viewed both hymns and congregational singing

with continual suspicion. At Horsley Down Chapel, whose famous pastor, Benjamin Keach, had issued a small volume of hymns, they had singing only at the close of every service, so that those of the congregation who disapproved of it might retire. From churches of this kind Watts's hymns were excluded, but almost everywhere else they gradually made their way, and in a short time a second edition was in requisition. Watts, indeed, had at last broken down the barriers of "custom," that "tyranness of fools" as he calls it; he had burst through the stratum of black marble in which he and the rest of the Christian world had so long been embedded. At the enormous difficulties that confront all men who are similarly ambitious he glances in a memorable verse:

> "Mere hazard first began the track,
> Where custom leads her thousands blind
> In willing chains and strong;
> There's scarce one bold and noble mind
> Dares tread the fatal error back;
> But hand in hand ourselves we bind
> And drag the age along."[1]

[1] Works vii. 259.

CHAPTER VIII

1709—1712

BOLD BRADBURY

Of all Watts's ministerial contemporaries no figure is more conspicuous than that of the masterful and militant Thomas Bradbury, inspired preacher, pulpit firebrand, saint, buffoon, ogre, zealot, hard-headed, inflexible Calvinist, latter-day Hugh Peters—as friend or enemy thought fit to describe him. He was of a tall, strong, and well-set figure. He wore under "a hat of a very monstrous circumference" a large full wig.[1] His stentorian voice is heard high above the clamour of the day. His food was roast beef. He sang, he jested. His vitality—he quivered with vitality—his fury in the presence of false doctrine and chicanery are difficult to understand in an age so spiritually weak and accommodating as the present. He never on any one occasion shrank from placing even his life in jeopardy when he believed the causes of religion or liberty were being attacked. He would not retreat even the fraction of an inch from the position which he

24. "I am king of me." Bury St. Chapel opened 29 Sep., 1708.

[1] In later years a black silk cap.

had taken. As his mind was apt to surge with a mixture of violent emotions, he sometimes struck when he might advisedly have withheld his hand. At such times his blows fell indiscriminately on friend and foe. That with the natural feverishness and jollity of his blood he delighted in the turmoil is evident. "How we are enjoying ourselves!" said the elephant, as he gambolled and trumpeted among the frogs who scuttled in all directions out of his way. Of fighting he never tired. He was in the brunt of every battle. He chose rather to be conquered than not to fight. Born at Wakefield in 1677, Bradbury, who was thus three years Watts's junior, preached his first sermon in 1696. A raw, uncouth lad, he found it a trying ordeal to stand up before grave, experienced elders. But, setting his face like a flint, he confronted them, and in a few minutes proved that he was a boy only in years. Thenceforward his assurance was superb, and he never knew the fear of man. After occupying minor pulpit positions, he became in 1707 pastor of the Independent Church in Fetter Lane (in succession to Benoni Rowe, who had died that year), and the most popular preacher in London. Against Jacobite and Papist he directed a hundred gibes. They were the butt alike of his "horrid candour," his pungent wit, his copious imagination, and his withering scorn. His invective powers were inexhaustible; no one knew upon what point

the attack would next come. He rioted in invective. His fury—his dementia—became a proverb. The Jacobites could have forgiven his blows—his imperious manner—his huge gusts of wrath, if he had forborne his jests. As Watts wrote a hymn every 5th of November, so Bradbury preached regularly on that day a special sermon, every sentence of which was alive, and therefore vivific. After the sermon, he and his friends would adjourn to a neighbouring respectable tavern[1] in order to dine together; and there in a great low-roofed room with a sanded floor, at the head of a polished oak gate-table and before a huge joint, Bradbury would sing in thunderous tones his single song, "The Roast Beef of Old England"—a song in which it is to be supposed no French-loving, Pope-loving person was ever known to join. Many of his 5th of November discourses were published, and they are among the most animated defences of our civil and religious liberties. The hatred of his enemies only gave new edge to his zeal and provoked him to additional invective. His eyes flashed. His cheeks flushed. The Jacobites were knaves—they were hydras, serpents, complicated monsters, cats-in-the-pan, buzzards top-heavy with October,[2] who had no better nostrums to offer to their

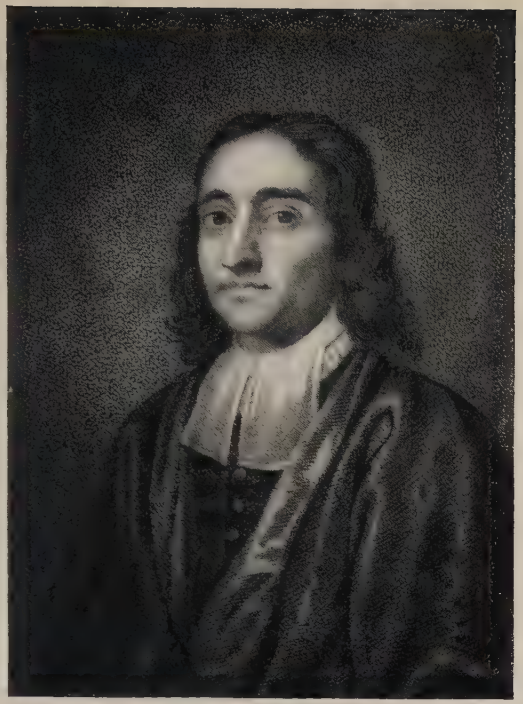
[1] In those days it was not an uncommon event for a minister and his friends to dine together at a tavern even just after an ordination.

[2] An allusion to the High Church October Club which met at the Bell Tavern, King Street, Westminster, where they talked sedition and drank October ale.

deluded followers than puff-balls and apples of Sodom, but he defied their sinister arts; he had the dogs on a string he had, and they knew it. He cast out lava, stones, whole rocks. In one sermon, referring to the defeat of the machinations of Rome he says strikingly, "The pomp and sorceries of the harlot lie floating as a great wreck." He called the Pretender "A son of Tabeal,"[1] and he hesitated not to point his diatribes against the great personages at court who were suspected of fanning the queen's retrogressive inclinations. And so he lashed what (changing the sex of the personage in Revelation xvii. 1) he punningly called the great Heehaw of Babylon. The Jacobites made some sort of retaliation by asserting that he had two mouths, "his nose being one, for he delivers his twirl of words through both;" that the cleanest thing belonging to him was his pulpit cushion, "for he is always beating the dust out of it;" and that he was the sort of man who would cry, "Fire! fire! in Noah's flood." His favourite verse was "Blessed be the Lord my strength, who teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight." Scarcely any bribe would have been considered too large could it have stopped his fiery eloquence. As an inducement to conform he was offered a bishopric. But blandishments were as ineffectual as threats. Remaining immovable, he was lampooned in the

[1] Isaiah vii. 6.

newspapers, belied in pamphlets, threatened by letter. The enemy finding that they might just as well threaten Skiddaw or Plinlimmon, made mows at him or glared at him impotently as they passed in the street. He could say truthfully as he often did say, "I am king of me." Like a rock, propt on himself he stood. Those who visited the home of "Bold Bradbury," as Queen Anne called him, remarked his strict punctuality in the family devotions. The Puritan blood ran thick in him. Anybody was to be put off excepting God. At the appointed hour, happen what might, the household were on their knees. One evening when the bell had rung for prayer (not prayers) some ruffians noticing that an area door had by chance been left open, thought it a good opportunity to commit a robbery. Their leader at once entered the house and crept stealthily upstairs. Arrived at the top he heard a solemn voice. It was that of Bradbury, supplicating for protection against Jacobites, cut-throats, Papists, and thieves. The scared wretch felt for the moment nailed to the floor, and then, tearing himself away, for he was quite incapable of persisting in his nefarious design, he returned to his companions, who roundly abused him for his timidity. The man, however, was so affected that next day he called on Bradbury and confided to him the circumstances. As a result of the conversation he was converted, and he ultimately became a member of the Fetter Lane Church.



REV. SAMUEL SAY.

From Walter Wilson's "Dissenting Churches."

REV. THOMAS BRADBURY.

From a portrait lent by the Librarian, Dr. Williams's Library, Gordon Square, London.

Among those who were drawn to Bradbury was Isaac Watts, and the hot-headed, stern, rugged, physically strong preacher of Fetter Lane, who could weather a whirlwind; and the frail, amiable, sweet-mouthed, elegant preacher of Pinners' Hall, whom a puff would have cast on to a sick bed—the man of war and the man of peace—the brass pot and the earthen pot—became bosom friends. Watts thoroughly admired Bradbury's "sprightly talents," but above all he admired Bradbury's courage. "How much," he says, in one of his essays,[1] "do I feel myself stand in need of this fortitude of constitution. What shall I do to acquire it? Methinks I should be ready to part with a few ornaments of the mind, and make an exchange of some of the more showy and glittering sciences for this bodily virtue, if I may so express it, this complexional bravery." Idealizing his friend, Watts even gave him credit for being an appreciator of music. In a poem called "Paradise," he imagines himself wafted to the abodes of bliss, and, while listening to the sound of the trumpet and the softer viol, he says :—

"I longed and wished my Bradbury there,
Could he but hear these notes, I said,
His tuneful soul would never bear
The dull unwinding of life's tedious thread,
But burst the vital chords to reach the happy dead."

It must have come as a revelation to "My Brad-

[1] Works vii. 360.

bury" to learn that he had a tuneful soul, and an even greater revelation that he would be specially attracted by the soft notes of the viol—the man whose favourite musical instrument (if he had one) was most likely the fog-horn.

In 1708 Watts's congregation, who since June, 1704, had, as we have seen, been worshipping in Pinners' Hall, erected for themselves a large square building[1] in Bury Street,[2] with three galleries, at a cost of £650.[3]

On Thursday, Sept. 23rd, "at five in the afternoon," the leading subscribers met together "at Amsterdam Coffee-house," in order "to agree upon a method for ye disposing of Pews and Places," and a circumstantial account of the proceedings on the occasion, with list of seatholders and the rate paid by each, has come down to us.[4] The opening service took place on October 3rd, the sermon being preached by Bradbury.

On 23rd Dec., 1708, Watts, writing to Say,

[1] In No. 14 of the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* is a faithful copy of the MS. relating to the building of the Bury Street Meeting House.

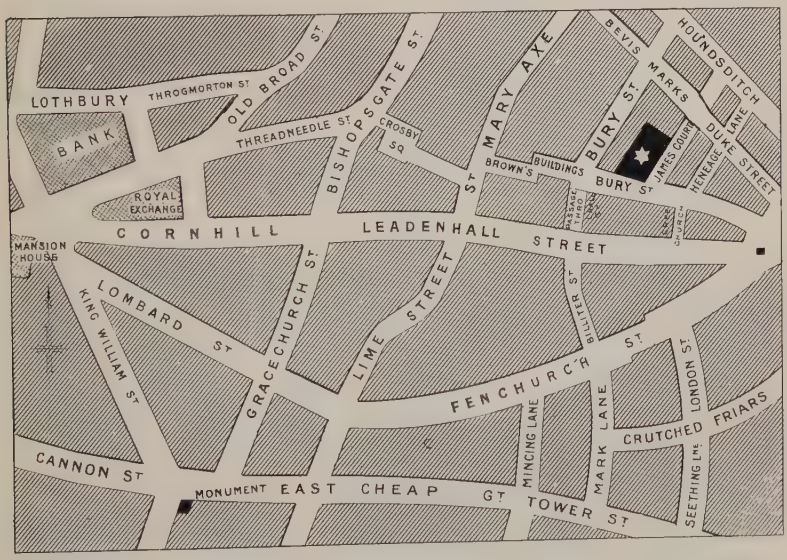
[2] In the 14th and 16th centuries the site was occupied by the great Priory of the Holy Trinity.

[3] The site of the Chapel and minister's house adjoining (viz., 30 Bury Street and 4 and 5 James Court) was in 1879 purchased by Mr. Herbert Fitch, of the firm, Herbert Fitch & Co., Ltd., Printers and Stationers, who erected upon it the handsome and extensive premises in which their business is still conducted. "The building and appointments of the chapel," says Mr. Fitch, "were of the commonest kind. In the whole place there was only one beam of oak. The total area was about 4,000 superficial feet."

[4] It is printed in the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* for May, 1907, in which are given plans of both Ground Floor and Gallery.

BURY STREET CHAPEL
after its conversion into a warehouse.

On the right is the Minister's residence.



* SITE OF DR. WATTS'S MEETING HOUSE AND MINISTER'S RESIDENCE.

Two blocks lent by Mr. Herbert Fitch.

observes: "My bookseller [John Lawrence] urges me to reprint my Hymns, and talks of another edition of the Poems [*Horæ Lyricæ*]. I earnestly beg you to point me those lines in either which are offensive to the weak and pious, and shocking and disgustful to the polite, or obscure to the vulgar capacity, or in short, whatever you think should be mended, and, if you please, with your amendment; but I entreat it, especially for the Hymns, in a fortnight's time." Watts also wrote in similar strain to others. On receiving their replies he "got a friend or two together and spent a whole day in perusing and considering the remarks." "I agreed," he tells Say (12th March, 1709), "to their judgments, I think, in all things; in the whole there are near half a hundred lines altered, I hope always for the better. Some that were less offensive were let pass; for the bookseller desired I would not change too much; besides that, lesser faults would not be spied by the vulgar, nor much offend the polite. But I have added above a hundred, and most of them to the first book. I hope all now more approvable, for their chief design, than the foregoing edition." He comments also on the progress of the new edition through the press, remarking that "the printer," John Humphries, "by the cold weather, and by working off a supplement of the new Hymns apart, has been made so

25. "Give me the Wings of Faith to Rise."

dilatory that he has not yet printed all the first book," and he invites further criticisms on the second and third books "in a week or two."

The second edition appeared in April, 1709, and, as I have already observed, the additions were: *Hymns*, Book i. 72 [79—150]; Book ii. 60 [111—170]; Book iii. 3 [23—26]; Doxologies 8. Thus to the 210 hymns of the first edition were added 135, making a total of 345.

Of the hymns added to Book i., the best are No. 87, which begins:

> "Life is the time to serve the Lord,
> The time to insure the great reward;
> And while the lamp holds out to burn,
> The vilest sinner may return,"

and that perfectly cut gem, No. 101, "Who can describe the joys that rise?" Of those added to Book ii., the finest is the magnificent "Give me the wings of faith to rise" (No. 140), foolishly altered by some compilers to "Give us the wings of faith to rise," in which there is a loss under the score of euphony while the gain is nothing. This is how Watts wrote it:

> "Give me the wings of faith, to rise
> Within the veil and see
> The saints above, how great their joys,
> How bright their glories be.
>
> Once they were mourning here below,
> And wet their couch with tears;
> They wrestled hard, as we do now,
> With sins, and doubts, and fears.

HYMNS
AND
Spiritual Songs.

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II. Compos'd on Divine Subjects.
III. Prepared for the Lord's Supper.

With an ESSAY

Towards the Improvement of Christian Psalmody, by the Use of Evangelical Hymns in Worship, as well as the Psalms of *David*.

By *I. WATTS.*

And they sung a new Song, saying, Thou art worthy, &c. for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us, &c. Rev. 5. 9.

Soliti essent (*i. e. Christiani*) convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere. *Plinius in Epist.*

LONDON,
Printed by *J. Humfreys*, for *John Lawrence*, at the Angel in the *Poultrey*. 1707.

TITLE PAGE OF FIRST EDITION OF WATTS'S HYMNS.

I ask them, whence their victory came,
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.

They mark'd the footsteps that He trod
(His zeal inspir'd their breast;)
And, following their incarnate God,
Possess the promis'd rest.

Our glorious Leader claims our praise
For His own pattern given,
While the long cloud of witnesses
Show the same path to heaven."

Very fine, too, is No. 142, "Not all the blood of beasts." The additions to Book iii. do not call for special comment.

The third edition of the Hymns appeared in 1712, the fourth in 1714. John Lawrence still controlled the work, but there was a new printer, S. Keimer,[1] who was a distinct improvement on dilatory John Humphries. The fourteenth edition appeared in 1740.

26. Miss Singer again. Her marriage.

Horæ Lyricæ also went into a second edition, and in it were included recommendatory verses by various admirers, including the Rev. Henry Grove,[2] Miss Singer (Philomela), and the Countess of Hertford (Eusebia). These two ladies indeed became to Watts what Mrs. Unwin and Lady Austen afterwards were to Cowper—the inspirers

[1] For account of him see my *Life of Daniel Defoe*, p. 199.

[2] Presbyterian minister at Taunton where, with the Rev. Stephen James, he conducted an Academy for the training of young men for the ministry.

of much of his best work—the persistent encouragers of his pen. In one of the poems Watts had invoked the Muse Urania (Divine Poetry), but Lady Hertford,[1] "in whose judgment of books" there was "a sort of infallibility," said gracefully that he needed not to invoke any Muse, for the heavenly song "came genuine from his heart." Miss Singer and Watts often stimulated their literary powers by "tossing poets" to each other; thus on 14th May, 1709, he is found thanking her for directing him to translate from Racine.[2]

Like Watts, Miss Singer found delight in introspection. "If," she says, "I do not write a diary, and with Du Bartas, 'Sing myself my civil wars within;'[3] however it is a practice that I cannot but approve in other people. Sometimes, for want of greater novelties, I read the *Map of Man*[4] in this author; it is a perfect picture of human nature and the general caprice of mankind."[5]

Unfortunately, very few of the letters that passed between Miss Singer and Watts have

[1] Horace Walpole includes the Countess, or rather the Duchess of Somerset, as she became, in his *Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors*. He says she "had as much taste for the writings of others as modesty about her own."

[2] Works vii., p. 214.

[3] This line was not by Du Bartas. It occurs, as already mentioned, in *Self Civil War*, a poem translated from "The Latin of Master George Goodwin," by Joshua Sylvester.

[4] *The Map of Man*. "From Latin Saphiks of that Famous late Preacher in London, Mr. Henry Smith." Translated by Joshua Sylvester. *The Map of Man* and *Self Civil War* were bound up with the folio edition of Sylvester's Translation of Du Bartas; hence Miss Singer's mistakes.

[5] Mrs. Rowe's Works iv., 120.

come to light, but their burden may be gathered from her works and from Watts's references to her. A characteristic remark of hers was, "My wants have been hitherto plentifully supplied by Divine Providence, on which I desire immediately to rely, without the least regard to second causes." About this time she was attracted to Mr. Thomas Rowe, son of Watts's friend, the Rev. Benoni Rowe. He was 21 years of age (that is, 13 years her junior), handsome of face and figure, and an accomplished linguist, being "a perfect master of the Greek, Latin and French languages." He possessed one of the finest private libraries in Europe, and he had literary ambitions, desiring to be a second Plutarch—to compile biographies, indeed, of all the illustrious persons of antiquity that Plutarch had omitted. To Miss Singer, of whom he wrote:

> "Youth's liveliest bloom, a never-fading grace,
> And more than beauty sparkles in her face,"

he became passionately attached, and the affection was reciprocated. In her ardent poem, "The History of Joseph,"[1] and in her soulful and impassioned prose, his person is reflected as in a mirror. She would never send him a message by a friend. She said, "There is something in that so cold and formal, and so unequal to the tenderness I would express, that I resolved to write to you

[1] Founded on *The Maiden's Blush*, by Fracastorius, translated by Joshua Sylvester.

and send you all my soul." Elsewhere she says, "If I endeavour to say a fine thing, 'tis only to gain your applause; and when you are absent 'tis indifferent to me whether I speak common sense or not." It has been objected to her prose works that, popular as they once were, they are not merely sweet but cloying, and Watts, biassed as he was in her favour, admitted, though unwillingly, the justice of the charge. The pen, however, cannot always express with strict fidelity the preterfervid emotions of the human soul; the hand that held this pen was that of a Miss Singer; and warmth of heart in a woman, expressed felicitously or expressed infelicitously, is the jewel of jewels. In the following year, she and her "lovely boy" became wife and husband. The feeling of each for the other was not a passion, it was a frenzy of love. Watts wished the bridegroom every happiness, and he was sincere, for his was one of those rare natures that can derive pleasure even from the joys of a rival. The happiness of the newly-wedded pair, however, was destined, as will be seen, to be of but brief duration.

27. The Burning of the Meeting Houses, 1st Mar., 1710. Removal to Mr. Bowes', 30 Dec., 1710.

On the 5th of November, 1709, the famous puppet, Dr. Sacheverell, whose wires were manipulated by Atterbury and other Jacobites, preached at St. Paul's before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen his notorious "rhapsody of incoherent ill dressed thoughts," "Perils

among false Brethren," in which he denounced the Revolution as an unrighteous change, maintained the duty of punishing Dissenters, whom he represented in the most hideous of colours, and called on the people to defend the Church—the Church, which nobody wanted to injure, being, as some wag put it, in imminent danger from nobody knew whom; and so—accommodating puddle—he reflected Atterbury's moon. The Jacobites belauded more than ever the doctrine of Non-resistance. To their pious employments of rattling the dice box, shuffling their playing cards and emptying their bottles, they all of a sudden added that of reading what they called the Bible, that is the 13th chapter of Romans. If anybody objected to Sacheverell the 13th of Romans was "thrown at his head." If a Bible was brought to you it opened of itself at the 13th of Romans. Oddly enough these clumsy Jacobite tricks were all but successful. Very unwisely the House of Commons resolved on Sacheverell's impeachment. During the trial, which took place in Westminster Hall, and lasted over a fortnight, the whole city—say rather the whole country—was in an uproar. Sacheverell was the idol of the hour. His smug and expressionless, that is to say, his "lovely" image in mezzotint "stared out of every print shop." He went in parade and state from his lodgings in the Temple to Westminster Hall, using "a chariot with large glasses,"

so that everybody might see and adore his wooden head. The mob followed, huzzaing, tossing their caps, shouting his praises, pressing to kiss his fat hands, and holding dirty palms for the money which his attendants disbursed out of their coaches. On the evening of the second day of the trial the rabble, incited by the High Church firebrands, and frenzied with gin, which could be had at any Jacobite tavern for the asking, poured through the city with the intention of demolishing all the meeting-houses, their fury being directed particularly against Bradbury and another friend of Watts, Daniel Burgess, a sardonic and rasping orator whose epigrams stung like a whip. Burgess held that the only way to come at an audience was to be vehement; and he had urged his people to be "moving stars," adding, "When the tongue has done its utmost, fall to with the hands and do the business." It was also remembered against him that he once enquired as if innocently asking for information, Why Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and then waled the enemy with the predetermined answer, "Maybe because the Almighty did not wish His people to be known as Jacobites"; nevertheless, jesting in the pulpit he held to be improper unless medicinal.

Making first for New Court Chapel, Burgess's meeting-house, the mob which "was directed by some of better fashion who followed in hackney coaches, and were seen sending messages to them,"[1]

[1] Burnet.

broke into it and tore down the pulpit and pews, which they carried into the neighbouring Lincoln's Inn Fields, piled high and set into a blaze—making "moving stars" of them as they said. One dirty wretch was crushed to death by the falling of a gallery, and others were injured. Women with dishevelled hair—furies indeed rather than women—took part in the rioting. Thence they roared towards Bradbury's meeting in Fetter Lane, Jabez Earle's in Hanover Street, Long Acre; Christopher Taylor's[1] in Leather Lane, and "Mr. Hamilton's." All persons who refused to join them were ill-treated. "Before my own door," says Bishop Burnet, "one with a spade cleft the skull of another who would not shout as they did."

The burning of the pews, pulpits and galleries, of five meeting-houses was serious enough, but when the mob reached Dr. Samuel Wright's[2] Chapel in Blackfriars, instead of removing the fittings, they put rushes, links and other combustibles into the building and set them alight. By this time—it was two in the morning—the Guards had been called out; and their arrival prevented what must have been a second Fire of London; for had Wright's chapel been in full flame, nothing, owing to its confined situation, could have saved the city. At the first charge of the Guards, however, the rioters dispersed; and the fire after

[1] Christopher Taylor. See Wilson iv. 393—396.
[2] Dr. Samuel Wright. See Wilson ii. 139—147.

serious trouble was got under. A few of the rioters were arrested in front of the smoking chapel, but owing to influence at Court they were let off with light punishments, while the abettors escaped scot free.

On 22nd March, Sacheverell was brought in guilty and enjoined not to preach again for three years. This was regarded by the Jacobites as equivalent to an acquittal, and further riotings immediately followed. "Nobody," said Defoe, "could think or talk about anything but the trial." Even the ladies caught the contagion. They had "hardly leisure to live, little time to eat and sleep, and none at all to say their prayers." The ultimate result of the agitation was the fall of the Whig Government and the advance to power of the Tories under Harley.

During the summer of 1710 Watts regularly took horse exercise, and found that it not only contributed to his health but that it also helped as did all other exercise to enliven his imagination. He rode about 800 miles, and composed both hymns and sermons during his progress. On 31st Dec. he exchanged Mr. Hollis's in the Minories where he had resided eight years for apartments with a Mr. Bowes, with whom he stayed two-and-a-half years, and at the same time he hired a new reader —John Merchant—in the place of Edward Hitchin who had just left him. In Nov., 1711, he was afflicted with the double loss of Lady Har-

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And they sung a new Song, saying, Thou art worthy. &c. *for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us,* &c. Rev. 5. 9.

Soliti essent (i. e. *Christiani*) convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere. *Plinius in Epist.*

LONDON,
Printed by *J. H.* for *John Lawrence* at the Angel in the *Poultrey.* 1709.

TITLE PAGE OF SECOND EDITION OF WATTS'S HYMNS.

topp and her daughter, Mrs. Gould, an event which he improved in a sermon which is printed in his Works.[1] The pious mother, he said, had "led the way to heaven but a few days before the pious daughter followed. . . . As mutual affection joined their habitations in life, so the care of surviving friends has laid them to rest in their beds of earth together."

28. Green Dragons, Bears and Ghosts. 1712—1713.

Watts's *Hymns*, it will be remembered, appeared in 1707, and a second edition in 1709. It was apparently early in 1710 that, drawing inspiration from Say, he commenced his "Imitations" of the Psalms. He had worked steadily at them in his rooms at Mr. Hollis's, and he continued his labours at Mr. Bowes'. On 26th July, 1712, appeared in the *Spectator* Addison's beautiful hymn, "The Lord my pasture shall prepare," and on August 9th the even more beautiful "When all Thy mercies, O my God." Watts read them with delight, and the incident gave a new impetus to the work which he had in hand. A little later he sent to the *Spectator* his own rendering of Ps. cxiv., a psalm in which beauties had revealed themselves to him every time he studied it; and both letter and rendering appeared as No. 461, on Aug. 19th, prefaced by a few introductory words by Steele.

[1] Lady Hartopp died 9th Nov.,; Mrs. Gould, 15th Nov. They were "buried in woollen" at Stoke Newington Church on 26th Nov. See Works ii., pp. 140, 155, 175. Mr. Gould was knighted some time after his wife's death.

In the autumn of 1712, before he had got half through the Psalms, his health broke down—the result of too close an application to his studies—and for weeks he was prostrated by a serious illness. "Amid all the violence of my distemper," he says, "and the tiresome months of it, I thank God I never lost sight of reason or religion; though sometimes I had much ado to preserve the machine of animal nature in such order as regularly to exercise either the man or the Christian." He refers in verse also to the phantasmagoric horrors that accompanied this dreadful illness, observing:

> "Oh 'tis all confusion!
> If I but close my eyes, strange images
> In thousand forms and thousand colours rise—
> Stars, rainbows, moons, green dragons, bears and ghosts."

But his most acute distress arose from the fact that he was unable to proceed with his rendering of the Psalms. "David's harp" was "ready strung for the Messiah's name," but he who would touch the chords was "confined to sit in silence," and to "waste the golden hours of youth."[1] The illness lasted during the whole of 1713, and even on 4th November of that year, when he wrote a letter to the church,[2] he had but faint hopes of recovery. In it (and it was read on November 5th, "when almost all the brethren were present") Watts warmly thanked his people for their kind support

[1] Watts was 38.

[2] Milner, p. 327.

of him under a "tedious and expensive sickness," and advised as to the course they should take in case of his death. But there was more in this illness than he thought (Is there not more than we think in every important event of our lives!) for, as we shall see, it proved to be in its result more blessed to him than any other event of his career. While he was in this condition his friend Burgess, of "moving stars" fame, also lay on a bed of sickness. Burgess knew that his work on earth was done, and he was ready to go. "If I am to be idle," he said, "I would rather be idle under ground." Hearing a shriek ring through the house he asked what was the matter. "We thought you had been dying," was the reply. "What if I had!" commented the sick man. Those were his last recorded words.

CHAPTER IX

SPRING 1714—1718

"OUR GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST"

29. Theobalds, Spring, 1714.

In the spring of 1714 Watts began to mend, and Sir Thomas Abney, who believed that fresh air and a change of surroundings would do more good than medicine, invited him to spend a week at his country seat, Theobalds,[1] near Cheshunt, Hertfordshire. The stately mansion of Theobalds, which had been erected by Elizabeth's powerful minister, William Cecil, had been razed by the Parliamentarians in 1650, and apparently even the ruins had disappeared at the beginning of the 18th century. On the estate, however, had arisen several noble houses, one of which had become the home of Sir Thomas Abney.[2] The grounds were once the finest in England, with their lakes, canals, bridges, fountains, haw-haws, quincunxes, laby-

[1] Sometimes pronounced Tibbalds.

[2] Mr. J. French, of Waltham Cross, writes (17th Dec., 1913):—"The house usually accredited to Sir Thomas Abney was pulled down about a year ago. It was a typical, square, well-built house of the Queen Anne type, and of red brick, ornate and lofty. It stood on the north side of Theobald's Grove. Only one other house could very well have been in his occupation, a house which still stands in the old palace enclosure. Mr. French has in his possession a sun dial from the demolished house. It is a square eight inch plate with the motto, 'Redeeme ye tyme,' and dates probably from the middle of the 17th century."

rinths, terraces and summer-houses; and the portion that surrounded Sir Thomas's house still preserved some of its antique glory. When the week was over, the Abneys pressed Watts to stay longer, and lastly they invited him to remain with them for good. He gladly consented, with the result that his health which had for so long been precarious, gradually returned, his emaciated body put on flesh, and his blanched cheeks regained their natural colour. And so, by invisible hands, Watts is suddenly transported from a dull, austere retreat, and from the gross air of a crooked, narrow city street into a fine English mansion under the open sky. In place of bricks and tiles and a few stunted, pent-up trees, he could, at will, feast his eyes on the crimsons and purples of gardens—the pomp of cedars of Lebanon. Whose were those invisible hands a man of Watts's piety was not ignorant.

To the characters of Sir Thomas Abney, Lady Abney, and their "virtuous daughters," Sarah, Mary, and Elizabeth,[1] whose education he superintended, and whose most vital interests were thenceforward his own, Watts paid various and warm-hearted tributes. Several of his works were written to give them pleasure, and he composed mottoes for the sun-dials in Sir

[1] Sarah was eleven years old. She died unmarried, 9th March, 1732. Mary married Jocelyn Pickard of Bloxworth, Dorset, and died without issue, 12th Feb., 1738. Elizabeth, who was ten years old, died unmarried in 1782.

Thomas's garden. In one of the rooms which had a window looking west was a ceiling or Spot Dial—an invention of Sir Isaac Newton—which consisted of a little mirror fixed in the floor so as to reflect the sun on to a dial marked on the ceiling; and Watts composed upon it the lines:—

> "Little sun upon the ceiling,
> Ever moving, ever stealing
> Moments, minutes, hours away;
> May no shade forbid thy shining
> While the heavenly sun declining
> Calls us to improve the day."[1]

His favourite retreat at Theobalds was an alcove in one corner of the garden where he used to keep some of his books, including a choice copy of Virgil, the works of Cicero, of whom he was an ardent admirer, and the volumes of the *Spectator*. In this arbour-library[2] he composed a number of his "Imitations" of the Psalms, and there are some pleasant reminiscences of it in his work, *The Strength and Weakness of Human Reason*.[3] His favourite walk led northward from Theobalds to the imposing Annian house which, altered and enlarged, became Cheshunt College.[4] The house was probably the residence of one of Sir Thomas's

[1] These sun-dials also afforded him illustrations for his sermons. See Evangelical Discourses, No. 11, Works ii., p. 95.

[2] When in London Watts made use of Sir Thomas Abney's town house in Lime Street.

[3] 1731.

[4] Lady Huntingdon's people took possession of it in 1792. It is now an Anglican Training College.

friends, for in the grounds and on the bank of the New River is a square brick summer-house, "Watts's Wig," as it is called, in which—according to tradition—Watts used to write. We have already referred to Watts as an early riser. He could be seen walking out any morning when the early sun showed through the network of elms that skirted the park, and the cows were driven home to milking through the haze of their own breath. There are in his works many references to this habit, indeed one whole poem, The Lark[1], is occupied with the subject:—

> "Night past and all the shadows fled,
> The rosy morn began t' appear;
> When I forsook my weary bed,
> And walked abroad to take the air."

He loved, he said, to see the eyelids of the morning (an allusion to Job xli. 18), that is to say, the first bright golden slit of opening day and the black, scowling, retreating cloud above it. His delight in the early morning is manifested also in his prose works. "Surely," he says in Sermon 29, "it can be no great hardship for any persons in health to begin their day with the rising sun, for almost half the year."

In Hymn 79, Book 1, the Almighty is magnificently addressed as "God of the morning." And who does not know the "Divine Song":

> "This is the day when Christ arose
> So early from the dead;

[1] Posthumous Works, Vol. i., p. 86.

Why should I keep my eyelids closed,
And waste my hours in bed?"

When with Watts indeed we are always in the keen, fresh, exhilarating air.

Those were black days for the Dissenters; and, indeed, for the Whig party generally. The Jacobites were in the ascendency; and the Pretender, Lord Bolingbroke, and Bishop Atterbury had their hands at the nation's throat. The queen, no longer the "pious Anna" of former days, was merely a tool—and a despised tool—in their control. The court had become "a nest of idolatry." A "Schism Bill" with artfully contrived provisions for mischief had passed through Parliament and had received the royal assent. It was to become operative on Sunday, August 1st (1714). The re-establishment of Popery in the nation was prophesied "with mighty gust." The Saturnian reigns of Charles II. and James II. were to return, nay, even the pious days of Queen Mary, when the thumbscrew, the rack and other holy ordinances were religiously administered, and "the burning of a martyr was a popular entertainment."[1] England was once more to be deluged with "friars, white, black, and grey, with all their trumpery." The Dissenters were once more to be fined, pilloried, dungeoned, exiled, done to death. Great events were impending. A frightful

30. The Death of Queen Anne, 1 Aug., 1714.

[1] Bradbury, Sermon, 7th June, 1716.

storm seemed to be gathering. Even the bravest hearts, even the heart of Thomas Bradbury grew heavy. The Dissenters had looked forward to the time when the angel of Revelation xviii. would take up the mighty millstone and Popery be no more. And it had come to this!

On the morning of August 1st, good Bishop Burnet passing through Smithfield in his carriage, caught sight of "a hat of a very monstrous circumference," and a moment after, recognised Bradbury, who was standing stock still in a very pensive mood, his eyes upon the pebbles. With his usual curiosity and inquisitiveness, Burnet stopped the carriage, and putting out his wigged head and burly shoulders, he exclaimed, "Why are you so buried in thought, Mr. Bradbury?" "I have been wondering, Bishop," replied Bradbury, "whether I shall have the constancy and resolution of that noble army of martyrs whose ashes are deposited in this place; for I most assuredly believe that similar times of violence and persecution are at hand, and that I shall be called to suffer in a like cause." Burnet, who was no less zealous than Bradbury in the Protestant interest, observed, "Then you have not heard the news! The Queen is seriously ill and has been given over by physicians. I am on my way to court in order to obtain the latest particulars. I will despatch a messenger to you with the earliest intelligence of her death. If you are in the pulpit when he

arrives he will drop a handkerchief from the gallery."

At the usual time Bradbury ascended his pulpit, and in the middle of the sermon a handkerchief fluttered from the gallery opposite him. During the preceding few days he had lived fast, as men do in serious times, and at the sight of the handkerchief his blood galloped through his veins. Suppressing his feelings, however, he calmly, though with difficulty, continued his sermon ; but in his last prayer he fervently thanked God for the deliverance of these kingdoms from the evil counsels of the wicked, and implored the divine blessing upon his Majesty King George. So it was by the medium of a prayer that the news of the Queen's death and the new Monarch's accession was first conveyed to his astonished congregation. He then gave out the 89th Psalm (from Dr. John Patrick's collection), that tremendous pæan in which God is glorified, and glorified again, on account of the discomfiture of His enemies. The news "of the miraculous upsetting of the Jacobite plans" flew east, west, north and south. Men ran through town and village shouting, "The Queen is dead! The Queen is dead!" And it was true. Queen . . . Anne . . . was . . . stone . . . dead. The grove of lions through which so many good men had during the previous week been passing, proved to be only a grove of painted lions. The sable pall that had settled on

the country instantly rolled away. The dreadful storm is averted. The sun bursts forth in its fulness, and every bird whether on spray or in the blue sky praises God with its tiny throat. In every town thanks are rendered to heaven. As for the Jacobites, their faces grew an ell long. They gazed at one another in stupid consternation. "What a world this is," wrote Bolingbroke to Swift, "and how does Fortune banter!" Watts, however, and other God-fearing men knew better than to ascribe the event "to a phantom on a wheel."

When Bradbury's congregation next met they expected a powerful sermon, and they were not disappointed. Bradbury in wig, band and black gown ascends the pulpit steps, hat "of a very monstrous circumference" in hand. He hangs the hat on the peg that projects from the panelling at the back of the pulpit; but it is noticed that there are no "silken signs" of mourning on the hat. The preliminary part of the service is gone through. He gives out his text: "Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her; for she is a king's daughter!"

Another minister founded his discourse upon the terrible indictment of that prince who "did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." For half a century the Dissenters regarded the 1st of August, 1714, as the great day of deliverance—the Protestant Passover.

Even the lethargic George Benson,[1] preaching at Salters' Hall 44 years afterwards, could but exclaim: "Oh that glorious First of August! that most signal day, which ought never to be forgot!" Watts, who when Anne promised toleration to the Dissenters, had inscribed to her an ode, took upon himself to append to it a palinode in which he hailed George's glorious star, which rose when

> "Anna sunk in western skies
> Streaking the heavens with crimson gloom,
> Emblems of tyranny and Rome,
> Portending blood and night to come."

But not only was an Anne dead, to her had succeeded a prince who steadily refused to allow religious persecution. George had faults, but his decisive "No!" more than outbalanced them. When God gives He gives lavishly.

A long procession, consisting of leading Dissenting ministers, all dressed in steeple hats, white bands, and black cloaks, carried up a congratulatory address to the new monarch.

"Pray, Sir," sneered Lord Bolingbroke, addressing Bradbury, "is this a funeral?"

"Yes, my lord," replied Bradbury, triumphantly, "the funeral of the Schism Bill."

Those "biting beasts," the Jacobites, had been chained up, their presumptuous hopes blasted. The very men who had procured the

[1] Pastor at Poor Jewry Lane [now Jewry Street] from 1740 to 1762.

scandalous pardon for the miscreants who had fired the meeting-houses were, by the voice of the nation, declared to be traitors themselves. Some skulked in disguise in back streets, others were glad to take refuge on the Continent, where —countenanced by "Old Infamy" (as Louis XIV. was called, on account of his persecution of the Protestants)—they moped and intrigued against the British Government. The impossible had happened. And yet there are persons who say that God takes no heed of human affairs! It was in the midst of these dramatic alarms and changes that Watts wrote that glorious and rousing hymn of triumph and faith, "Our God, our help in ages past."[1] As Miriam sang her divine song after the deliverance from Pharaoh, so Watts sang his divine song after the discomfiture of the Jacobites, and impressed upon his own generation and upon posterity that the grace of God—and the grace of God alone—renders man invincible. England has taken this hymn to her heart. It has been sung on all great and solemn national occasions whether of peril or of joy. So long as she remains a really Christian nation, and so long only, is her strength and glory assured. If, turning from the religion of the Gospels she accepts on the one hand Atheism, or on the other the corrupt teaching of Rome, her fall is inevitable, and will be as distinct and as little lamented as the fall of the empires of

[1] Watts's rendering of Psalm xc.

Thebes, Babylon and Nineveh. The verses of this hymn which are in common use are 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9. Compilers have spoilt the first line by altering it to "O God, our help in ages past," the object being to avoid repetition of the word "our." To alter it, however, is to weaken—nay, to profane—the whole line, which admits of no improvement. The men of Watts's time regarded the Almighty as *their* God, and we should regard Him as "*our* God." The compilers have not been entirely unkind to this hymn, however. For example, they have improved the rhythm of verse 2 by altering "Under" to "Beneath." The six immortal verses as Watts wrote them are:

"Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come:
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth receiv'd her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night,
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;

They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come;
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home."

On 4th March, 1715, Watts lost his sister Mary, who was buried in St. Michael's Church, Southampton, where there is a memorial to her, and on 13th May the same year died Thomas Rowe, who, it will be remembered, married Miss Singer. Mr. and Mrs. Rowe had had five years of happy married life, and the event left her broken-hearted, while Watts truly mourned the loss of a pious and cultured friend. Writing soon after her husband's death to the Countess of Hertford ("Eusebia"), Mrs. Rowe said:

31. "Oh, he was all my soul!" 13 May, 1715.

"For him all thoughts of pleasure I forego,
For him my tears shall never cease to flow,
For him at once I from the world retire
To feed in silent shades a hopeless fire."[1]

Elsewhere she wrote: "Since that fatal moment my soul has never known a joy that has been sincere. I look backward and recall nothing but tormenting scenes of pleasure that have taken their everlasting flight. Oh, he was all my soul! Wealth, friendship, honour, all present joys and earnest of the future, were summed up in him." She occupied her remaining years in works of

[1] Mrs. Rowe's Works iv., 51.

charity and piety, spending most of her time at her home in Somersetshire. During a visit to Lady Hertford at Marlborough, she wrote in a grotto made by her ladyship of rocks and shells her well known *Letters from the Dead to the Living*.[1] Several hymns also left her pen, including the beautiful "Thou didst, great Triune God, exist," which is still prized by the churches.

In 1717 Watts was again prostrated by sickness, and on 12th Feb., 1718, he wrote from Theobalds to the Church in Bury Street a letter that has not hitherto been published. After the customary pious greeting he says, "I acknowledge with much affection and gratitude your hearty love to me under my long affliction, and your continual requests to God for my restoration to you. . . . My dwelling so much in the country is so far from preventing my attendance on this church, that I find it the only means whereby I can hope to be restored to your service; for I have made a new and sufficient experiment of this lately. The good family[2] where I have been entertained with so much kindness (and which God hath made instrumental of so much mercy to me) was confin'd in London by particular providences the last month for five Lord's days together; and it was only the first of these days that I could appear in

32. "He wants me not." 12 Feb., 1718.

[1] Published in 1728.

[2] The Abney family.

publick worship with you: the last fortnight I was reduced so low that I could seldom pray in the family. He that sees the secrets of all hearts knows the inward longings and desires I felt towards this assembly; but He that gave me this inclination is a witness of my incapacity. I wait His time, and seek and pray for submission and length of patience. . . . If you would know my present state of health, I think I am a little refreshed with the country air since I left the city six days agoe; though I would be glad always to dwell among you where my chief business lies and my chief pleasure, if God saw fit to intrust me with any measure of usefull strength. If there be any secret sin for which God yet contends with me, I long to have it discover'd that there might be no more cause of further contention betwixt my God and me.

"O may the good spirit of Prayer be with you that at length ye may prevail, and lay a foundation for much thanksgiving! Blessed be His name who hath thus far supported me; I long to serve Him, and I think I value my life for no other purpose: but He wants me not, nor my poor services; and however He deals with me, I joyn heartily with all your prayers for ye spirituall and eternall wellfare of this church, to which I am engaged in all the bonds of love, gratitude and the Gospell. And while my worthy and beloved friends are assisting you at the mercy-seat may

they obtain mercy for themselves and the churches under their care! May Divine success attend all their labours wheresoever they are called to spread ye savor of the name of Christ! and may our heavenly Father reward into all your bosomes that labor of love you are all engag'd in this day on the account of

"Your unworthy and afflicted brother and servant,

"I. WATTS."

33. The Psalms of David imitated. 1718.

By God's mercy Watts gradually regained strength, and in 1718 he was able to conclude his metrical rendering of the Psalms, which he published with the title, *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and applied to the Christian State and Worship.* To Cotton Mather, 17th March, 1717, he had written, "'Tis not a translation of David that I pretend, but an imitation of him, so nearly in Christian hymns that the Jewish Psalmist may plainly appear, and yet leave Judaism behind."

In the earliest Psalms Watts is not very successful. Indeed, he did not begin to find his strength until he reached the seventeenth:—

> "Lord, I am Thine; but Thou wilt prove
> My faith, my patience, and my love:
> When men of spite against me join,
> They are the sword—the hand is Thine."

Very sweet is the 23rd:—

> "The Lord my Shepherd is,
> I shall be well supplied;

Since He is mine and I am His,
What can I want beside?"

Ps. 48 has that besetting fault of Watts—grotesqueness, but it contains the frequently quoted verse:—

"These temples of His grace,
How beautiful they stand!
The honours of our native place,
And bulwarks of our land."

Ps. 72 (second part) is that glorious pæan, "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," of which only the four finest verses appear in most hymnals, namely, 1, 5, 6 and 8:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns,
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blessed.

Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honours to our King.
Angels descend with songs again;
And earth repeat the loud Amen."

The magical effect of these verses on every Christian reader enables him to form some idea of the rapture into which Watts fell while writing them. It is only on a very few occasions in a

life-time that any man, as Plotinus observes, can attain unto real ecstasy—can rise above the limitations of the body and the world. Surely Watts was in a state of this kind when he wrote these holy verses. No. 87 is "God in His temple lays," and No. 90 the glorious "Our God, our help in ages past," of which I have already spoken. No. 92 (first part) is the perfervid and precious "Sweet is the work, my God, my King," of which the most exquisite stanzas are:—

"Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
To praise Thy name, give thanks and sing,
To show Thy love by morning light
And talk of all Thy truth at night.

Sweet is the day of sacred rest,
No mortal cares shall seize my breast:
Oh may my heart in tune be found,
Like David's harp of solemn sound!

. . . . .

Sin (my worst enemy before)
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more;
My inward foes shall all be slain,
Nor Satan break my peace again.

Then shall I see, and hear and know
All I desired or wished below;
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy."

Of Psalm 100 Watts made two versions, and it is from the second that was evolved the magnificent "Before Jehovah's awful throne." This hymn, which originally had five verses, first appeared in the 1st edition of *Horæ Lyricæ*, 1706, with the following rather grotesque opening:—

"SING to the Lord with joyful voice,
Let every land His name adore;
The *British* Isles shall send the noise
Across the ocean to the shore."

One of the lines in verse 2, "Know that the Lord is God alone," was borrowed from Dr. John Patrick.[1] When Watts included the hymn in his volume of 1718, material improvements had been effected. Certainly, the grotesque opening verse was retained, but the remaining five verses (for in its revised form the hymn had six) read for the most part as we now have them. The last important change, which came in 1737, was the handiwork of John Wesley. Noticing, with his rare critical eye and ear, that the first verse was infelicitous, and the fourth commonplace, he omitted them, and, in an inspired moment, altered the beginning of the second verse to

"Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy."

A later editor changed, for the sake of euphony, the word "must" in one of the verses to "shall." The text as generally used at the present day may now be given. The portions not Watts's are printed in italics. The references (which are only to the unitalicised portions) indicate from which of Watts's two versions the word, half line, line or verse is taken. Thus H. ii. 1 means *Horæ Lyricæ*, verse 2, line 1; P. ii. 1, Watts's Psalms, verse 2, line 1, and so on.

[1] A Century of select Psalms, 1697.

"*Before Jehovah's awful* throne (H. ii. 1.; P. ii. 1.)
Ye nations bow with sacred joy; (P. ii. 2.)
Know that the Lord is God alone,[1]
He can create and He destroy. (P. ii. 4.)

His sovereign power without our aid
Made us of clay, and formed us men;
And when like wand'ring sheep we stray'd
He brought us to His fold again. (P. iii.)

We'll crowd Thy gates with thankful songs;
High as the heavens our voices raise;
And earth, with her ten thousand tongues,
Shall fill Thy courts with sounding praise. (P. v.)

Wide as the world is Thy command;
Vast as eternity Thy love;
Firm as a rock Thy truth *shall* stand
When rolling years shall cease to move." (H. v. P. vi.)

Such is the story of the evolution of one of the finest and most majestic hymns in the language. As it now stands it is as near perfection as human skill can reach. The remainder of Watts's "Imitations" show a distinct declension. There is not among them one hymn of strong brilliancy. With the powerful One Hundredth he exhausted himself.

"One of the most noticeable features in Watts," observes Mr. T. Rowland Hooper, "was the orderliness of his mind, consequently there is consistency of thought and expression in everything that he wrote—hymns, poems, essays, sermons. It is the same Dr. Watts in a child's hymn as in a philosophical essay, though one is

[1] This line of Patrick's appeared in H. ii. 3 and P. ii. 3.

simple, the other profound." As an illustration of this consistency Mr. Hooper quotes a verse from Watts's version of Ps. 147 :—

> "He bids the sun cut short his race
> And wintry days appear,"

and observes that this way of putting it chimes with Watts's observation in the *Logic* that a right definition of the principal feature of winter is, Days are shorter, not, It is colder. It may be colder, but the coldness is the effect of shorter days. Mr. Hooper continues : " Watts's character is nowhere revealed more clearly than in his treatment of the condemnatory Psalms. Faithful to his convictions of truth and doctrine he rendered their various passages respecting the Divine judgments very plainly, as indeed did the other serious writers of the day, but he differed from his contemporaries in that, owing to a gentle and refined mind, he did not dwell unduly upon these passages. A more difficult task than that of versifying the Psalms it is scarcely possible to conceive, but none has done it more skilfully or with more poetic feeling, though not a few of his verses reveal that, like his less successful rivals, he felt the strain."

34. A Hostile Reception.

Watts's Hymns had been subjected to much hostile criticism, but that was nothing to the rough treatment received by his Psalms. The attack came from two quarters. First, from those who objected to sing-

ing of any kind, secondly, from those who clung to Sternhold and Hopkins's version; and the objectors gave vent to their feelings by the publication of hostile pamphlets, the best known and most clumsy being: *A Vindication of David's Psalms from Mr. I. Watts's Erroneous Notions and Hard Speeches of them;* and *Reasons wherefore Christians ought to worship God, not with Dr. Watts's Psalms, but with David's Psalms*, &c. Even six years later, when Watts published his *Logic*, the murmuring had not ceased, for in that work when dealing with the subject of prejudice, he says,[1] "It is for the same reason that the bulk of the common people are superstitiously fond of the Psalms translated by Hopkins and Sternhold, and think them sacred and Divine because they have been now for more than a hundred years bound up in the same covers with our Bibles."

The bitterest—the most truculent—attack, however, came from the quarter where least expected, namely, from Watts's quondam friend, the Rev. Thomas Bradbury, the labyrinthine turnings of whose mind could have been responsible for almost anything. When Watts first set about the "Imitations" Bradbury had encouraged him, but on the appearance of the book he roared out the opinion that the author had taken too great a liberty with the original, and had given undue licence to his inventive faculty—in short, that he had mangled,

[1] Works vi., 96.

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garbled, transformed the songs of Zion. Doctrinally, too, Bradbury and Watts were beginning to diverge; and the rift in their friendship grew broader and broader. Bradbury would have nothing at Fetter Lane but Dr. John Patrick's wooden version; and once when the unfortunate clerk happened to give out a stanza from Watts, Bradbury leaned over the "pulpit quishion" and thundered, "Let us have none of Watts's whims." The brass pot had begun to knock against the earthen pot. Watts did not retaliate, and yet owing to that "excess of sharp juices mingled with his blood," and owing also to Bradbury's openness to attack, he must often have been sorely tempted. When the *Psalms* appeared Watts was 44, and the work which God specially designed him to do was done, for it is probable that even the hymns that were published subsequently, such as, "Am I a soldier of the Cross?" were already written." Had Watts been rapt from earth in the year 1718, his glory as a hymn-writer would have been the same, he would have escaped various troubles, and his admirers would have been spared two centuries of uneasiness. Up to this point his career in a Christian and literary sense had been success after success. He had reached his summit. Thenceforward his path did not rise, and it was a curiously uneven one. Bating a few occasional poems, he wrote no more verse. Thirty years remained to him—a period

in which he laboured profitably both for his own church and for other bodies of Christians—but the great work of his life was done. As a hymn-writer, Watts died at 44.

CHAPTER X

19TH FEB., 1719

MAKE-A-NOISE-TOM

His new life was that of the prose writer, the metaphysician, the argumentative divine. Against the Jacobites he wrote frequently. In the beginning of the reign of George I., he says, they "made their utmost efforts against us by lifting up axes and hammers against our places of worship, because of our inviolable attachment to his Majesty's interest, yet his wise and steady conduct soon suppressed those riots and the law secured us against future fears";[1] and in another place he expresses his gratitude for "the interposing providence of God in counterworking all the mischievous devices of Rome and hell" and in establishing upon the throne "the illustrious House of Brunswick." But although unable to injure the Dissenting ministers, the Jacobites allowed to pass no opportunities for annoying them. Watts's habit of telling his congregation to "double down texts" was considered a fair target for the enemy's virulence and wit; but the keenest shafts were

35. "Shorthand and other mechanisms of hypocrisy."

[1] Works i., 650.

directed against his practice "of using shorthand and other mechanisms of hypocrisy."

The system of shorthand adopted by Watts was that of Theophilus Metcalfe, whose *Radio-Stenography* first appeared in 1635, and reached in 1706 a 55th edition. In the *Improvement of the Mind* Watts, speaking of methods for the strengthening of the memory, observes: "The art of shorthand is of excellent use for this as well as other purposes." He used Metcalfe's system regularly between the years 1719 and 1741, and probably earlier and later; but this system though popular at the time was both clumsy and complicated, and altogether inferior to that of Jeremiah Rich as improved, used and taught by Doddridge. Watts, however, seems to have been interested in shorthand generally, for we find his name on the list of subscribers to *An Historical Account of Compendious and Swift Writing*[1], published in 1736 by the Rev. Philip Gibbs, assistant to the Rev. John Barker, at Mare Street Chapel, Hackney.

36. Salters' Hall, 19 Feb., 1719. Death of Hughes, 17 Feb., 1720.

For some time the Christian world had been disturbed by the writings of Thomas Emlyn, Dr. Samuel Clarke,[2] William Whiston and other Arian authors, the effects of whose teaching had been widely felt, particularly among the Dissenters. Even some of the minis-

[1] In the text books of these early systems of shorthand spaces were left for the characters which were filled in afterwards with the pen.

[2] Samuel Clarke (1675—1729), not to be confused with Doddridge's friend Samuel Clarke (1684—1750).

ters who plumed themselves on their orthodoxy were unconsciously tinctured with the doctrines of these men. In no place had Arianism obtained firmer grip than at Exeter, and the controversy was conducted on both sides with savagery. Ultimately, the contending parties decided to refer the matter to the ministers of the London churches; and the Committee of the three Denominations called a meeting of the whole of the Dissenting ministers in and around London. In the meantime a "Paper of Advices" had been drawn up with the professed design of healing the breaches that had been made, and the ministers were asked to consider the document; but this only fomented the quarrel. It was decided that the gatherings should be held at Salters' Hall meeting house, a great, square, rawish, brick building with four deep galleries, adjoining Salters' Hall, Cannon Street[1]—the famous meeting house in which Richard Mayo had preached to congregations that crowded even the windows, and in which Nathaniel Taylor, too old to walk, used to crawl up the pulpit steps on his hands and knees. At the very first meeting, which took place on 19th Feb., 1719, the peace-seeking Watts and the war-loving Bradbury found themselves in opposite camps. Watts, desirous of establishing harmony in the churches, hoped that a little give and take

[1] In 1827 it was acquired by a Society of Baptists whose church is now represented by Salters' Hall Baptist Church, Baxter Road, Essex Road, Canonbury, N. Pastor, Rev. Joseph Gay.

would bring about quiet and brotherly feeling. The quarrel, he observed, might after all be mainly about the fine meaning of words; and his amiability and complaisance suggested some sort of compromise. Bradbury took an entirely different position. His back had been stiff before. It now became iron. Not only did he refuse to give way; he led the onslaught on the opposite camp with all the energy of his determined soul. Though all the world should go wrong he would stand firm. If the position taken up by Watts was owing in part to excessive good nature, it was owing also to the fact that he had to some extent been influenced by the Arian writers. He held, for example, with some other prominent men of his time, that the "human soul of Christ had been created anterior to the creation of the world, and united to the Divine principle in the Godhead known as the Sophia or Logos; and that the personality of the Holy Ghost was figurative rather than literal."

At the second meeting, held on Feb. 24th, feeling ran high, and Watts and some of his friends, after expressing regret that the leading ministers should employ their rare powers dissentiously, withdrew from so much noise and clamour. Eventually Bradbury proposed for insertion in the "Advices" the declaration, "that there is but One only, the living and the true God, that there are three Persons in the

THE SYNOD AT SALTERS' HALL, FEBRUARY, 1719.

From "The Scourge," a contemporary periodical edited by "T. L."

Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

"Let those who really believe the doctrine of Christ's divinity," cried Bradbury, with his stentorian voice, "openly avow it. You who are not ashamed to own the deity of our Lord, follow me into the gallery."

He had scarcely mounted two steps before the opposite party hissed him.

Turning sharply round, he said, "I have been pleading for Him who bruised the serpent's head; no wonder the seed of the serpent should hiss."

It was then discovered that Bradbury's proposition was lost by a majority of four—fifty-three being for it, fifty-seven against. This did not mean that the majority favoured Arian principles, for most of them were avowed Trinitarians. It was merely an expression of opinion as to the propriety or impropriety of a declaration upon that point in the body of Advices. "It was not," said one of them, "from any doubts in our minds as to the generally received opinions upon that subject, but from our scrupling to subscribe to any human articles of faith." In the end two sets of Advices were sent down to Exeter.

When a little later Watts remonstrated with Bradbury for his violence, the latter replied, "Do you think that the ministers of London are to stand still while you tear in pieces eight great

articles of their faith? And must every one who answers your arguments be accused of 'personal reflections'?"[1] The attitude of Bradbury naturally provoked a whole flight of pamphlets. "The last state of this man," moaned one writer, "is worse than the first. Whether through the intemperance of a warm distempered imagination or an overfond conceit of his own abilities, he has torn our churches to pieces at London." The Church of England's attitude to it all was presented by T. Lewis in his periodical, *The Scourge*, which was furnished with a plate illustrative of the proceedings at what he calls the Bear Garden Synod. The Trinitarians, headed by Bradbury, are in the gallery, their opponents below. All are in steeple hats, bands, and black cloaks. Under the president, who is on the highest deck of the pulpit, sits the clerk, and under him four "moderators," whose attitude is expressed by the words written under them: "We are for no impositions." Those below are violently gesticulating. The "teller," as we may call him, stands in the front right-hand corner, and carries a paper "For or against the Trinity beloved." Opposite him is a waverer, with two faces, who carries papers labelled respectively, "As to my Principle," and "For my Interest." Whether he will go up into the gallery or remain below among the seated opposition hangs in the balance. By

[1] Bradbury to Watts, Mar. 7th, 1726. *Post. Letters* ii., p. 207.

way of answer to Lewis appeared a pamphlet entitled, *The Scourge Scourged.* Bradbury's reply to all criticism was a loud snort; and he was equally indifferent when the Jacobites published a Farce, *Make-a-Noise Tom alias Dealer-in-many-words Bradbury*,[1] which purported to be founded on events that occurred during one of his visits to his native town, Wakefield. Watts's feelings towards Bradbury may be summed up in his words, "There are savages in this wilderness which lies in our way to the heavenly Canaan; and we must sometimes hear them roar against us";[2] and having written them he retired to the calm, the sweetness, the refinement, the polar silence of his arbour-library at Theobalds, where in the company of his Bible with silver clasps and far removed from the welter of controversy—the din of "this wild world of beasts and men"—he gradually regained his equanimity. Nevertheless, the recollection of this unhappy controversy often caused him deep sorrow, and he was continually harassed by the fear lest the position he had taken up should be untenable. Some have held that he glided still farther towards Arianism; but proofs are wanting.

About the same time the Rev. Samuel Price, Watts's colleague, made in one of his addresses an indiscreet allusion to Bradbury. Bradbury's

[1] There is a copy in the British Museum.
[2] Sermons i., p. 319.

wrath was terrifying; and poor Price, who accepted his chastisement with Christian meekness, thenceforward went through life with his finger on his lips.

Watts occasionally heard from his old friend, John Hughes, and he read with interest Hughes's papers in the *Spectator*. In his later years Hughes was fond of expressing his belief in the immortality of the soul, quoting Xenophon's remark, "When I depart from you I shall be no more, but remember that my soul even while I lived among you was invisible to you";[1] and adding, "Whoever believes the immortality of the soul will not need a better argument for the dignity of his nature nor a stronger incitement to actions suitable to it."[2] Hughes died on 17th Feb., 1720, at the early age of 43. He was the first of the Stoke Newington quaternion to fall. His was a cultured and beautiful spirit, and its fragrance, though faint, still survives.

[1] *Spectator*, No. 537. See also on same subject, No. 210.
[2] *Spectator*, No. 537.

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CHAPTER XI

1720—19TH MAR., 1728

HUMORIST, LOGICIAN, PREACHER

37. Divine and Moral Songs, 1720.

At various times Watts accompanied Sir Thomas and Lady Abney when they visited Mr. Robert Ashhurst,[1] of Hedingham Castle,[2] Essex, a rich citizen, who had married Lady Abney's sister, Elizabeth.[3] During the year 1719, while Watts was engaged upon his *Divine and Moral Songs*, Mr. Ashhurst was busy restoring, and practically rebuilding, his house,[4] situated a short distance from the castle, and when he had discharged the workmen he invited the Abneys and Watts to pay him a visit. This was apparently in the spring of 1720, for in the *Divine and Moral Songs*, some of which were written at Hedingham Castle, we are taken into the "meadows to see the young lambs" (Song 2); the tulips are in bloom (Song 22), and there is the reflection :—

> "How fair is the Rose! what a beautiful flower!
> The glory of April and May;"

[1] Son of Sir William Ashhurst, Lord Mayor of London in 1694, and for many years M.P. for that city. Sir William died in 1719. Some of the Ashhursts were friends and ardent admirers of Richard Baxter.

[2] Of the castle, only the massive keep, 110 feet high, now remains.

[3] She died 17th June, 1721. Robert Ashhurst died 1726.

[4] See Horace Walpole's letter to Geo. Montagu, 25th July, 1748.

which reminds us that the seasons were in those days considerably earlier than at the present time. It adds a new charm to these quaint but attractive Songs to recall that they were the result of saunterings in the old bird-haunted garden, among the hives, in "Dr. Watts's Walk," as his favourite sauntering place is now called, and under the beetling great keep of Hedingham. The pretty poem, "How doth the little busy bee," was probably not only a kindly message to children, but also a humorous compliment to the industry and taste displayed by Mr. Ashhurst in restoring his house.

"How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower.

How skilfully she builds her cell!
How neat she spreads the wax!
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes.

In works of labour, or of skill,
I would be busy too;
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthful play,
Let my first years be past,
That I may give for every day
Some good account at last."

Some of the thoughts in Song 18, "Against scoffing and calling names," reappear in the verses at the end of one of Watts's sermons (No. 24);

Divine Songs—No. 13.

THE DANGER OF DELAY.

Divine Songs—No. 24.

THE CHILD'S COMPLAINT.

From the Edition printed at Coventry by Luckman and Suffield.

Divine Songs—No. 22.

Moral Songs—No. 4.

From a copy, without title page, lent by Mr. J. Elliston.

Divine Songs—No. 3.

PRAISE TO GOD FOR OUR REDEMPTION.

Moral Songs—No. 3.

THE ROSE.

Copies lent by Miss Sanders and Mr. John Ferguson.

Illustrations of the "Divine and Moral Songs" from Eighteenth Century Chap-books.

and of Song 22, "Against Pride in Clothes," there are echoes in the hymn at the end of sermon 23. In the song occur the chastening thoughts :—

> "The tulip and the butterfly
> Appear in gayer coats than I;
> Let me be drest fine as I will,
> Flies, worms and flowers exceed me still;"

and in the hymn we are made to say :—

> "What if we wear the richest vest
> Peacocks and flies are better drest."[1]

Song 25, "My God who makes the sun to know," is in reality, Hymn 79 of Book I., re-cast with simple and beautiful expression suited to a child's capacity; indeed, the children's version is far better than the adults'; but the spirit that breathes in the former breathes also in the latter. Socrates is Socrates still.

To turn to the *Moral Songs*. The line in No. 2, "There's none but a madman will fling about fire," is the burden of a passage in sermon No. 26[2]. "Thomas and William" were something more than "two pretty names." They were the two brothers of Mr. Robert Ashhurst, but as William was 24 years of age and Thomas a little younger, there must have been some hearty laughter, Watts joining in it, when he read aloud for the first time :—

> "But Thomas and William and such pretty names
> Should be cleanly and harmless as doves or as lambs
> Those lovely sweet innocent creatures."

[1] Works i., 272. [2] Works i., 300.

The sluggard:—

"'Tis the voice of the sluggard: I heard him complain;
You have waked me too soon, I must slumber again;"

was probably some real Hedingham lack-penny; and we can well believe that Watts did really pass by that garden with its healthy crops of wild briars, thorns and thistles; and that the bootless call referred to in verse 4 was actually made:—

"I made him a visit, still hoping to find,
He had took better care for improving his mind;
He told me his dreams, talk'd of eating and drinking:
But he scarce reads his Bible, and never loves thinking."

The teaching of these seductive old world songs —and they are fragrant as wild thyme—is condensed in No. 12 (The Advantages of Early Religion), and we may even say in one verse of it:

"'Twill save us from a thousand snares
To mind religion young:
Grace will preserve our following years
And make our virtue strong."

When dealing with Watts's Hymns, we noticed the indebtedness of some of them to the work of John Mason. Mason's lines (*Spiritual Songs* ii.):

"What shall I render to my God
For all His gifts to me?"

must have been quite a favourite with Watts, for he uses them not only in his version of Ps. 116, where he writes,

"What shall I render to my God
For all His kindness shown;"

but also in his Divine Song No. 4, in which

appear Mason's lines without the alteration of a single word:

"Whene'er I take my walks abroad,
How many poor I see!
What shall I render to my God
For all His gifts to me!"

Watts's work was eventually published with 28 Divine Songs, a few miscellaneous morsels of verse, 7 Moral Songs, and "a Cradle Hymn."

Those tender lines, "Hush, my dear, be still and slumber," were written indeed not by a young and loving mother bending over her baby whom she all but stifles with kindness and kisses, but by a little weazened retired bachelor, in a cradleless house, whose heart, however, was as warm, whose ways were as gentle as those of the happiest and fondest mother. To these songs is added in some editions, "The Beggar's Petition." So delightful a production deserved the success that it immediately achieved. Edition after edition appeared; and it also attained an enormous circulation in chap book style. As late as 1834 thirty editions were kept regularly in print, and the average annual sale in England alone was 80,000. Of the chap books, perhaps the most curious is the little volume with oval cuts "printed" at Coventry "by Luckman and Suffield, and sold by all Booksellers in Town and Country."[1] Time back, almost every child brought up in a religious atmosphere

[1] I have an imperfect copy. There is a perfect copy in the British Museum. Press mark 3436 c.c. 3.

had learnt at a mother's knee: "Happy the child whose youngest years," "Whatever brawls disturb the street," "'Tis the voice of the sluggard," "How fair is the rose," and other of these deliciously quaint and occasionally humorous songs. Indeed, many a demure, rosy-faced little maiden, and many a chubby, rollicking, noisy boy, knew the whole of the book by heart, and would repeat —for a cake of gilt gingerbread or a cardboard windmill at the end of a stick—any song you might select. They were "had over" in the farm kitchen on a Saturday night, they were sung by the lacemakers to their pillows as they sat working on cold winter mornings with pipkins of hot wood ashes under their petticoats; the ballad singers bawled them in the streets, ladies of birth crooned them to their babies. "I assure you my little boy [Viscount Beauchamp] is grown a great proficient in your songs for children," wrote Lady Hertford to Watts, "and sings them with pleasure."[2] Subsequently Watts wrote a simple Catechism for children. "For them," says Johnson, "he condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man acquainted with the common principles of human action will look with

[2] Letter to Watts, 3rd August, 1731.

veneration on the writer, who is, at one time, combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year."

38. Watts as a Humorist.

The Divine and Moral Songs remind us that Watts, like most amiable men, had the gift of humour. This reveals itself particularly in his lines, "Against Pride in Clothes," and in that pleasant mixture of archness and instruction, "The Sluggard." A number of his essays also evidence a merry heart. In one he has his jest at the expense of a young pedant who had just returned from his travels, bringing with him among other curiosities the skeletons of a hare and a partridge. "Observe, Sir," said he to his uncle, "how firm the joints! how nicely the parts are fitted to each other! How proper this limb for flight, and that for running! and how wonderful the whole composition!" The uncle took due notice of the most considerable parts of those animals, and observed the chief remarks his nephew made; but being detained there two hours without a dinner, he said, assuming a pleasant air, "I wish these rarities had flesh upon them, for I begin to be hungry, nephew, and you entertain me with nothing but bones."[1] Another anecdote written in one of his merry fits is pointed at ministers who will not take the trouble to cultivate the art of preaching extempore. A lady, who was much displeased with her maid-servants for

[1] Works vii., 336.

some pieces of cross ill-conduct in domestic affairs, complained, as she herself "had not the spirit of reproof," to her husband. He entreated her to excuse him from interfering in matters relating to the kitchen and the parlour. "It is all entirely under your dominion," he observed, "and if your maids are so culpable you must reprove them sharply." "Alas!" said she, "I cannot chide: however, to show my resentment, if you will write down a chiding, I will go immediately and read it to them."[1] In order to illustrate the "gross ignorance and senselessness of sin" that are sometimes displayed in the presence of death, Watts observes that people will say, "Alas, poor man! he is gone; but surely he is gone to heaven; for though he did not mind much of religion, indeed, yet he was an honest creature, he would not wrong a man of a farthing, and he was ever ready to do his neighbour a kindness. It is true, he would drink now and then a little too much, nor was he always so careful to speak the truth, and perhaps he would swear when he was in a passion, but never when he was sober; he was no man's enemy but his own, and did no injury but to himself."

There are other passages of a similar piquancy scattered up and down the pages of his works—and particularly in *The Strength and Weakness of Human Reason*.[2] The year after the publication of

[1] Works vii., 337.
[2] Works, vol. 3.

Divine Songs, that is, in 1721, Watts issued a work that caused much controversy, namely, *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*. In it he avowed himself a Trinitarian, but held that prayer "directed distinctly" to the Holy Spirit is nowhere inculcated by Scripture. Watts's position was criticised by Martin Tomkins, a minister who after adopting Arian principles had retired from the pastorate of Abney Chapel—his reply taking the form of a tract, the title of which, founded upon a passage in Watts's work, ran, *A Sober Appeal to a Turk or an Indian*.[1] In 1724 Watts issued a second work dealing with the subject of the Trinity, *The Arian invited to the Orthodox Faith*, the particular Arian he had in view being Mr. Tomkins; but orthodoxy was pleased neither with this book nor with the others in the same vein that subsequently came from Watts's pen.

39. Death of Sir Thomas Abney. 6 Feb., 1722.

In the spring of 1722 Watts lost three of his friends, Sir Thomas Abney, Sir John Hartopp and the Rev. Samuel Rosewell. Sir Thomas Abney died on 6th Feb., 1722,[2] and was buried at St. Peter's Cornhill. His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Jeremiah Smith,[3] co-pastor with Samuel Rosewell at Silver Street, and published as a quarto with an elegiac poem by

[1] See Milner, p. 585.

[2] Edward Abney, Sir Thomas's son by his first wife, died, aged 20, in 1716.

[3] See Wilson iii., 58—60.

Watts, written at the request of Lady Abney.[1] "I mourn," says Watts, "by turn and comfort too," adding, "He that can feel can ease another's smart." Then occurred (on 1st April, 1722), the death of Sir John Hartopp,[2] at the age of 85, and Watts improved the event in a funeral discourse entitled, "The Happiness of Separate Spirits."[3] Meanwhile the health of the Rev. Samuel Rosewell had been failing. To Watts, who visited him on April 5th, Rosewell said,[4] "I am going up to heaven, and I long to be where my Saviour is. I know I am a great sinner, but did not Christ come to save the chief of sinners? Dear brother, I shall see you at the right hand of Christ. There I shall see Sir Thomas Abney and our other friends who have gone a little before."[5] On April 7th, Watts wrote to Rosewell one of those loving and beautiful letters which came so frequently from his pen. "Your most agreeable and divine conversation two days ago," he said, "so sweetly overpowered my spirits, and the most affectionate expressions which you so plentifully bestowed on me, awakened in me so many pleasing sensations, that I seemed a borderer on the heavenly world when I saw you on the confines of heaven, and conversed with you there. . . . May your

[1] It is dedicated to Lady Abney and her daughters, Sarah, Mary and Elizabeth.

[2] Lady Hartopp had died 9th Nov., 1711. See Works ii., 140.

[3] Works ii., p. 157.

[4] Works i., 482. See also Letters to Mrs. Rosewell. Milner, p. 444.

[5] Works vii., 483. Milner, p. 385. See also Wilson iii., 49.

pains decrease, or your divine joys overpower them. May you never lose sight of the blessed world, and of Jesus the Lord of it, till you are safely arrived. And may the same grace prepare me for the same mansions." That same day Rosewell died, and Watts's next letter to the house was one of condolence together with messages of comfort to the widow.

40. The Logic, 1724.

Some twenty-five years previous Watts, as we have seen, had written for the instruction of his pupil, John Hartopp, a volume on Logic; and at last, urged thereto by his friend the learned John Eames,[1] tutor at the Nonconformist Academy, Tenter Alley, Moorfields, he resolved to revise and present it to the public. This book, which appeared in 1724, and at once attained popularity, owing chiefly to its being used as a text-book at the Universities, is perhaps the only work of the kind which a person could pick up and enjoy and forget that he is reading a treatise on Logic. Its most valuable section is Chapter 3—the Golden Chapter—golden, however, considered only in the light of its assistance in the conduct of life. The student of art and literature would be ruined by accepting its teaching. William Blake would have condemned it root and branch. He who is about to start in business should read every word; he who is about to write a book which he hopes will make its mark

[1] See Wilson ii., 73.

in the world, or to paint a picture concerning which he has burning ambitions, should avoid this Golden Chapter as the plague; for the height of wisdom in the shop becomes the lowest depth of imbecility in the study and the studio. A few citations will explain my meaning.

"Our imagination," says Watts, "is nothing else but the various appearances of our sensible ideas in the brain, where the soul frequently works in uniting, disjoining, multiplying, magnifying, diminishing, and altering the several shapes, colours, sounds, motions, words, and things, that have been communicated to us by the outward organs of sense. It is no wonder, therefore, if *fancy* leads us into many mistakes, for it is but *sense at second hand.* Whatever is strongly impressed upon the imagination some persons believe to be true."[1]

Again, "It would be of great use to us to form our deliberate judgments of persons and things in the calmest and serenest hours of life, when the passions of nature are all silent, and the mind enjoys its most perfect composure." In short, he would have us keep a Worry Book,[2] in which we should set down our fears with a view to examining them and smiling at them at a future time. I warned the author and the artist against this chapter, but inasmuch as both author and artist

[1] Works ii., p. 99.
[2] See also § 47.

must at times also be men of affairs, they, too, on suitable occasions, may consult it with profit. The following passage, written by a man who was parsimonious of time, and wished others also to avoid wasting it, may be read advantageously by everyone: "The way of attaining an extensive treasure of ideas is, with diligence to apply yourself to read the best books; converse with the wisest of men, and endeavour to improve by every person in whose company you are. . . . Search into things yourselves, be acquainted with men as well as books. . . . To shorten this labour, if the books which you read are your own, mark with a pencil the most considerable things in them which you desire to remember. Thus you may read that book the second time over with half the trouble, by your eye running over the paragraphs which your pencil has noticed. It is but a very weak objection against this practice to say, I shall spoil my book; for I persuade myself that you did not buy it as a bookseller to sell it again for gain, but as a scholar to improve your mind by it; and if the mind be improved, your advantage is abundant, though your book yields less money to your executors."

In the matter of the education of girls Watts was miles ahead of most of his contemporaries. "What is it but custom," he asks, "that has for past centuries confined the brightest geniuses, even of high rank in the female world, to the only

business of the needle, and secluded them most unmercifully from the pleasures of knowledge and the divine improvements of reason? But we begin to break all these chains." Watts's *Logic* (1724), *An Humble Attempt* (1731), and *The Improvement of the Mind* (1741) form a trilogy from which every earnest student can benefit. They are a map, or, rather, an indexed atlas, of life. The first is addressed to the hard-reading student, the second to the youthful minister, the last to the desultory reader.

41. Brother Bradbury once more, 1725. A Letter from the Elder Watts.

In 1725 commenced another theological duel between Watts and the never-resting Bradbury. Bradbury, who held that Watts was a Socinian—a traitor to the faith—had poured out against him, and in particular in his lectures at Pinners' Hall,[1] an unceasing flow of "sarcastical language." One frenzy of a sermon followed another. In October the duty fell to Bradbury to distribute a charitable bequest among necessitous ministers, and among those whom he selected was the Rev. Caleb Wroe, minister of the Independent Church[2] at Crossbrook, Cheshunt, Watts's neighbour and friend. For some reason or other the embarrassing duty of thanking Bradbury fell upon Watts, who added to his letter (1st Nov., 1725): "But while

[1] He was a lecturer there from 1712 to 1759.

[2] Close to Theobalds. Mr. Wroe was at Cheshunt from 1705 to 1728.

I am acknowledging your unexpected goodness to my friend, permit me, Sir, to enquire into the reason of your conduct towards myself. . . . I cannot imagine what occasion I had given to such sort of censures as you pass upon me. . . . Jesus, the Searcher of hearts, knows with what daily labour and study, and what constant addresses to the throne of grace I seek to support the doctrine of His deity as well as you, and to defend it in the best manner I am capable of."

Bradbury replied on 23rd Dec. (1725). After reiterating his charge of heresy he says, "I heard and saw the holy Sir John Hartopp, with tears running down his cheeks, lament your opposition to Dr. Owen,[1] which he imputed to an instability in your temper and a fondness for your own inventions;" and then Bradbury made charges against various other ministers. Watts, replying on 24th Jan., 1726, ignored the reference to Sir John Hartopp and Dr. Owen, but he asserted in respect to the remaining charges that "the strength and vivacity" of Bradbury's imagination were only too ready to magnify and swell to a prodigious size "any supposed reflections" made upon him.

In answer to a further charge of Socianism formulated by Bradbury, Watts replied on March 15th (1726), observing: "My weaknesses of nature are so many, and perpetually recurring,

[1] That is to Dr. Owen's doctrines. Owen died in 1683.

that I am often called to look into the other world, and would not dare to write anything that might derogate from the divine ideas which Scripture ascribes to God my Saviour and my Sanctifier."

Watts, indeed, like the Rev. John Barker and a number of other ministers of the period, had struck into a middle path between the Calvinists and the Arminians—the path first taken by Richard Baxter, and so was often spoken of as a Baxterian.[1]

In 1719 the Meeting House and adjoining land at Southampton, which had been leased by Watts's father to the Southampton Nonconformists, was purchased by them for the sum of £150, and a few years later they decided to pull down the old building and erect on its site a more commodious structure. In a long letter dated 16th Feb., 1727, and addressed to "Mr. Isaac Watts at the Lady Abney's house in Lyme Street, London," Isaac Watts, senior, who had prospered in life and was about to retire from business, gives his son details of these transactions, which were complicated owing to trouble caused by one of the members of the congregation—a William Fay, who found "fault with everything not agreeable to his humour." The letter closes with an account of the health and state of the different members of the family then

[1] See Wilson ii., 39.

residing in Southampton[1]: "Yo[r] mother is still continued under God's afflicting hand, myself under a fit of the gout in one of my feet. . . . Your two nephews, Isaac and Thomas, under different circumstances of affliction brought very low. . . . Yo[r] Bro and sister Brackstone and their little ones and Bro Enoch all Indifferent. Our state is attended with a mixture of merceyes and judgmts: may we be Enabled to Improve both aright and to exercise as we ought the dutyes of prayer and praise and to fit us for future providences. May we have ye Divine Spirit's assistance till we are called into the Eternal regions by him who orders all things in wisdom and love to his." The letter closes: "With respective salutations of all yo[r] relatives and mine and yo[r] mother's dear affections.

"I am yo[r] affct father

"Isaac Watts."

Then follows a P.S. with further reference to the troublesome William Fay, whom the poor gentleman could by no means exclude from his mind.

In 1726 there was a general election, and Watts and other ministers recommended Lord Barrington to the electors of Berwick-on-Tweed. Bradbury, who happened to be at variance with his Lordship, promptly fell upon Watts tooth and nail, charging him, among other counts, with

[1] The original letter is preserved in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London.

having represented Lord Barrington "as something more than man." Watts, in reply, declared that he had written nothing, but what with uprightness and honesty of heart, he designed for the service of the Dissenting interest.

Bradbury continued, however, to point his wit and satire at Isaac—as he called him—though his allusions to him like his other levities were not infrequently deficient in taste. Somebody once said to him, "As you have had so much experience in the pulpit, Mr. Bradbury, it must cost you little trouble to prepare a sermon." To which Bradbury replied, archly, "I always endeavour to have an Isaac on the altar; but if the Lord is pleased to provide a ram for the burnt offering, I thankfully accept it."

Watts could scarcely be said to retaliate, and yet in one of his works, *An Humble Attempt*[1], is a passage which may or may not have been provoked by one of Bradbury's onslaughts: "Let your conversation," he says, addressing the ministerial body, "be grave, manly, and venerable, remember your station in the church, that you sink not into levity. . . . Remember that our station does not permit any of us to set up for a buffoon."

That Watts was often hurt by Bradbury's manner of attack is evident from several of his letters. In one he observes: "It has always been

[1] 1731.

MRS. ROWE.

From the title page of her Poetical Works published by Sutterby in 1820. Engraved by Engleheart.

a painful and grievous thing to me to hold a contest with any person living, much more with one for whom I have had so sincere an esteem, more especially since my constitution and my spirits are much broken by long illness."

Notwithstanding, however, all that had occurred, Bradbury still preserved in his heart of hearts something of his old kindly feeling towards Watts. At one of the meetings of ministers at Dr. Williams's Library in Red Cross Street,[1] they happened to stand side by side—the one big and burly, and upright as a cypress; the other diminutive and frail, and crooked as an aged willow. Watts, who had something to propose, found considerable difficulty, owing to his weakly condition, in making himself heard.

"Brother Watts," said Bradbury in his stentorian voice, "shall I speak for you?"

"Why, Brother Bradbury," returned Watts, gently, "you have often spoken against me."

With this incident, which is not wanting in pathos, Bradbury drops out of Watts's life,[2] but not out of history, for, a theological Alexander, he still continued to prance on his high horse over the theological world.

In March, 1796, Watts received from a fellow

[1] Now in Gordon Square. For account of Dr. Williams see Wilson ii., 198—211.

[2] In 1728 Bradbury resigned his pastorate at Fetter Lane and removed to New Court Chapel, previously the Rev. Daniel Burgess's. Here he preached for 30 years. He died 9th Sept., 1759, aged 81.

minister, the Rev. Nathaniel Lardner,[1] who was then in charge of a chapel in Hoxton Square, a copy of that divine's two volume work, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*. Although only 42, Lardner had for long been afflicted with deafness—had written, indeed, two years previously, "I am, indeed, so deaf, that when I sit in the pulpit, and the congregation is singing, I can hardly tell whether they are singing or not."[2] Watts acknowledged the receipt of Dr. Lardner's work and sympathised with its author's affliction in the following words:

"To the Rev. Mr. Nath[el] Lardner in Hogsdon Square.[3]

"Dear Sir,

"I received your kind and obliging gift of y[e] two volumes of your labors. I'me persuaded they will be of singular use to justify ye Evangelic history against the Cavils of our modern infidels.[4] Everything that tends to support the Gospell is true service to our Blessed Savior and to Religion; especially in such an Age when even in Great Britain we are turning Heathens. May y[e] God of all grace support you under your unhappy restraints

[1] Nathaniel Lardner, afterwards Doctor in Divinity and minister of the chapel in Poor Jewry Lane, now Jewry Street, 1684—1768. The Rev. Daniel Neal, historian of the Dissenters, and Watts's friend, married his sister.

[2] For detailed account of Lardner's life see Wilson's *Dissenting Churches*, Vol. i., pp. 88—110.

[3] Lardner was then assistant minister to his father at a chapel in Hoxton Square. He subsequently became assistant to Dr. Wm. Harris at Poor Jewry Lane Chapel.

[4] A reference to the writings of the deistical Thomas Woolston, Anthony Collins, and others.

from ye freedom of conversation, and render you greatly useful to ye Church of Christ by your retirement and studies. Please to accept this small acknowledgment of your kindness from,

"Sir,

"Your ffriend and Brother in ye Gospel,

"I. WATTS."[1]

42. At Hedingham Castle again, 10 Aug., 1727.

Watts and Lady Abney visited Hedingham again on 2nd March, 1726.[2] Since the period of the *Divine Songs* there had been great changes both among the Abneys and the Ashhursts. Sir Thomas Abney, Mr. Robert Ashhurst and Mrs. Ashhurst were all dead,[3] and William Ashhurst, Robert Ashhurst's brother, had become head of the family. Watts and Lady Abney were once more at Hedingham in August, 1727. On the tenth of that month Watts wrote to the Rev. Samuel Say, who had married his Cecilia[4]—that is to say his Cecilia had married him (for he, bashful man, never had the courage to do anything whatever except as the result of the importunity of others)—and was settled at Ipswich[5] as co-pastor with the Rev. Samuel Baxter. "Dear Bro.," says Watts, "Mr. Ashhurst informed me some weeks

[1] For this letter I am indebted to Gilbert W. Jennings, Esq., J.P.

[2] See Watts's letter to Bradbury of that date.

[3] Mrs. Ashhurst died 17th June, 1721. Mr. Ashhurst died 25th Feb., 1725, aged 54. There is a mural monument to him in Hedingham Church. They left two sons, William and Thomas. William died 13th Jan., 1734, æt 39.

[4] See § 9.

[5] Say was there from 1725 to 1734, when he removed to Westminster.

since he saw you at Ipswich, and you gave him reason to expect your company a day or two at Hedingham Castle when I was there. I am arrived here this day, and hope to spend all next week there; if your affairs permit you to fulfil your promise, I know it will not be disagreeable to Mr. Ashhurst, and I am persuaded your company will be acceptable to the Lady Abney, &c. And if you will share a bed with me for a night or two, you will be a very agreeable companion to your old friend and brother and humble servant, I. WATTS."

Mr. Say arrived in due course at Hedingham Castle, and Watts, in a letter written to him a little later, comments on the pleasure which he had derived from the visit of his cultured but shy friend.

In 1727[1] Watts published *Prayers composed for the Use and Imitation of Children*, among those to whom he gave copies being Mr. Say's little daughter,[2] and Thomas Hollis, son of his old landlord in the Minories.[1]

43. "Fear Begone!" "Am I a soldier of the Cross?"

In 1721 Watts had published a volume of sermons. A second volume appeared in 1723, a third in 1727. They are on various subjects and a number of them close with a hymn. All these sermons

[1] I take the date from Milner.

[2] See Watts's letter of 2nd Feb., 1727. She became the wife of the Rev. Isaac Toms, of Hadleigh, Suffolk.

[1] The book is now in the possession of Mr. Ernest L. Rayner, 34 Gleneldon Road, Streatham, London, S.W. This Thomas Hollis was a munificent benefactor to Harvard College, Massachusetts. The copy is dated 1728, but there is nothing to indicate that it is a second edition.

THE BANQUETING HALL,
The Castle, Castle Hedingham, Essex.

From photo by Fredk. Artis, Dedham, Essex.

CASTLE AND MANSION,
Castle Hedingham, Essex.

From photo by Fredk. Artis, Dedham, Essex.

were delivered with warmth and emotion, for he preached with fire in his eyes. The fact that the "movements of sacred passion" were the ridicule of the age—an age which pretended to nothing but calm reasoning—had with him no weight. At the conclusion of a moving sentence it was his custom to pause, in order that he might quicken the attention of his hearers and the more solemnly impress his message upon their minds. Advising preachers, he said, "Let all the warmest zeal for God and compassion for perishing men animate your voice and countenance, and let the people see and feel, as well as hear, that you are speaking to them about things of infinite moment, and in which your own eternal interest lies as well as theirs."[1] Dr. John Hawkesworth, editor of *The Adventurer*,[2] used to declare that Watts's delivery was superior to that of any other preacher of the day. Indeed, his pulpit exertions—his ambition to make the words of truth glitter like sunbeams and operate like a hammer, a fire, a two-edged sword[3]—were greater than his frail constitution could well sustain. His fervour, however, is quite lost in cold type. If his sermons make but plain reading, on the other hand they are eminently practical. He is excellent on such subjects as Patience. "Some persons," he observes,[4] "are in the habit when God puts them under some

[1] *An Humble Attempt*. Sect. iii.
[2] Started in 1752.
[3] Pref. to Sermons, vol. i.
[4] Works i., 321.

trial, to be angry with their friends;" and he continues, "If one were to search this matter to the bottom we should find the spring of it is an impatience at the sovereign hand of God; but because their Christianity forbids them to vent their uneasiness at heaven, they divert the stream of their resentment and make their fellow-creatures feel it. So a piece of unripe fruit pressed with a heavy weight from above, scatters its sour juice on everything that stands near it and gives a just emblem of the impatient Christian." Watts's finest sermons are those on Fear,[1] all of which are calculated to put life into the faint-hearted. Elsewhere he has described the effect of fear on the body, observing, "The hurry of the natural spirits shakes the whole network of the nerves in a moment; they throw all the blood into the face at once; or, by a contrary operation, spread a universal chill and tremour over the body and clothe the countenance in paleness and the image of death";[2] and in Sermon 29, he says, "To be overwhelmed and almost distracted with the crosses we meet with in the world is not becoming the character of a child of God. . . . The name of the God of Jacob in the 46th Psalm [God is our refuge and strength] is a match for all our foes and a sovereign remedy for all our fears."[3]

[1] Inspired perhaps by John Flavel's *Treatise of Fear*, which was dedicated to Sir John Hartopp. See Fol. ed. of Flavel's Works, p. 356.

[2] Works ii., 132.

[3] Luther used to say on any fresh appearance of danger, "Come, let us sing the 46th Psalm, and then let them do their worst."

He insists that we should bear "persecutions of all sorts from the hand of men with a holy courage for the sake of God." It is a great gain if when we are "plundered of our possessions, and stripped of all our comforts, we can yet be easy. . . . From the 40th to the 45th of Isaiah[1] there is a variety of rich encouragements against slavish fear. . . . Several of the Psalms are filled with the same heavenly cordials. In the writings of the evangelists and in the epistles you may read many precious promises scattered abroad to allay your fears. In the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Revelation they stand thick as the spangles of heaven. They sparkle like stars in the firmament at midnight, and they ever shine brightest in the darkest sky."

In Sermon 30 he says, "The man of courage can despise the threatenings of the great, and the scoffs of the witty, conscious of his own integrity and truth. He can face the world with all its terrors and travel onwards in the paths of piety without fear. The righteous man is as bold as a lion[2];" and the subject is finally clinched by that splendid hymn[3]:—

"Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies,
On flowery beds of ease;

[1] Works i., 363. [2] Prov. xxviii. 1. [3] End of Sermon 31.

While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign,
Increase my courage, Lord!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

Thy saints in this all glorious war,
Shall conquer though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
And seize it with their eye.

When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all Thy armies shine,
In robes of victory through the skies,
The glory shall be Thine."

In Sermon 37[1] is a delightful passage[2] on what we may call Holy Book-keeping, and it will be remembered that many of his hearers were city men with enormous responsibilities. "The providences of God here on earth," it runs, "present us daily with some new affairs, new occurrences. Whether they be pleasant or painful, still the spiritual man finds his interest in them; and when he reviews his account in the evening, if his heart has been in a proper frame, he may write himself gainer." Of death[3] he says beautifully, "A calm

[1] Works i., 431.

[2] This passage is a parallel to the Golden Verses of Pythagoras.

[3] Works i., 469, Sermon 40. See also the beautiful Sermon 43, "Death a blessing to the Saints."

and cheerful readiness for a removal out of this world is an honour done to Christ and His Gospel here on earth which belongs not to the heavenly state." A number of the most distinguished men of the day were among Watts's hearers. "Do you not sometimes, Sir," a friend once asked him, "find yourself too much awed by your auditory?" To which Watts replied, "When a gentleman of eminent abilities and learning has come into the meeting and taken my eye, I feel something like a momentary tremor, but I invariably recover myself by remembering what God said to the prophet Jeremiah, 'Be not dismayed at their faces.'"

Watts used to send all his works, as they came out, to Mrs. Rowe, for he knew that she was deeply interested in everything that sprang from his pen. She never forgot that she had been honoured by his love; nor he that he had once waited upon her as a lover. Her encomiums as conveyed in her letters of acknowledgment satisfied in him that intense craving for the sympathy of kindred souls which is an inherent weakness of the man of letters—a sympathy which (illogically enough) is not the less acceptable when it comes from a biassed heart and head—which is even more acceptable when that heart is as emotional and that head as beautiful as Mrs. Rowe's. She tells us that she read Watts's sermons with sincerest delight.

The Countess of Hertford (Eusebia) who had just become possessed of Watts's portrait[1], also admired them, but she was just then engrossed with James Thomson, who had dedicated to her his poem, "Spring." She invited Thomson, who "was of a full habit," to her country seat at Marlborough, "to hear her verses and assist her in her studies"; but to her chagrin discovered that "Mr. Thomson" found greater pleasure in drinking with Lord Hertford in his snuggery than in thinking with her in her grotto. In her next letter to Watts we learn that his Lordship was confined by "a severe fit of the gout," and Watts in several of his letters enquired feelingly after his Lordship's health. If "Mr. Thomson" did not also have a severe fit of the gout it was presumably not Mr. Thomson's fault.

About this time Watts took as his attendant and amanuensis, Joseph Parker, who served him faithfully to the end of his life.

[1] Given to her in Feb., 1729, by Mr. Shute, brother of Lord Barrington.

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON
N.W.

CHAPTER XII

19TH MAR., 1728—31ST OCT., 1734

PHILIP DODDRIDGE

The Dissenters of the Midlands had for some time been in need of a Nonconformist Academy, and in 1728 they were able to establish one at Market Harborough, which they placed under the direction of Philip Doddridge, who was then minister of an Independent cause at Kibworth. Before getting to work Doddridge consulted Watts, who entered heartily into the project, and the friendship between them which then commenced was severed only by death. Doddridge was 26, Watts 54. Doddridge did not stay many months at Market Harborough, for at the end of 1729 he received an invitation, which he accepted, from the Castle Hill Church, Northampton. Consequently, he removed—the academy removing with him—to that town. There for many years he preached in a gaunt chapel up a dull lane to an enthusiastic people. His academy was an imposing building in Sheep Street. He was a marvel of piety and activity, as, indeed, would be concluded from his epigram, suggested by the motto of his family, *Dum vivimus vivimus :*

44. "Live while you live."

"'Live while you live,' the epicure would say,
And seize the pleasures of the present day.
'Live while you live,' the sacred Preacher cries,
And give to God each moment as it flies.
Lord, in my views let both united be;
I live in pleasure when I live to Thee."

Besides superintending his church and teaching his pupils, he often rode out to preach in distant villages—but never without a manuscript stowed away in his saddle-bag. So fearful, indeed, was he of wasting a minute, that he had a pupil to read to him while he was dressing and shaving. He never rested—insisting that "one good work was the best relaxation from another." He rose early and sat up late, permitting himself only six hours sleep. But this was more than human nature could endure—and after a while there was trouble. He had the gift of assimilating knowledge swiftly. He tore the heart out of a book the moment he opened it. He was alert and cheerful. His eyes developed early in life the præternatural brightness of the consumptive's. From boyhood he had written hymns. "O God of Bethel, by whose hand," "Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve," "Grace, 'tis a charming sound," and other great harmonies were already in his heart—a heart which was thoroughly engaged for God and holiness. He regarded Watts almost as an apostle. "I cannot converse with you," wrote Watts to him, "upon an equal footing, for though I think my heart is honest, yet

Drawn by Hilton.

ISAAC WATTS.

Frontispiece to Rev. George Burder's Edition of Watts's Works, in 6 vols., 4to, 1810.

I am sure the kindness of your expressions far exceed mine. May the blessed God render you a much better man than you take me to be." Thenceforward many letters passed between the friends, but Watts's correspondence had by this time become very extensive. The following letter (3rd Dec., 1728), which has not hitherto been published, may be given as a specimen of his manner. It is to a Mrs. Richier, who was then "taking the waters" at Bath. "Your sister's continued weakness," says Watts, "confines you there where Providence has carried you. But every place is a Soyl, where the Plants of Grace may bring forth fruit to God, and where painfull Dispensations attending one whom we love may excite in us some pious meditations. . . . Your own frequent indispositions tell you also how uncertain is your dwelling in this tabernacle, & how nearly we border on the world of Spirits. The more we set ourselves on ye very edge of this Life by holy forethought, & practise the work of dying, ye fitter shall we be to receive the solemn and awful message. It is good to bear the Cross; The smiles of ye world & the universall ease of the flesh are much more dangerous than the sorrows of Providence & the Pains of Nature. We are too ready to forget our God, our hope, our home, our Eternal Interest amidst the Flatteries of prosperity and pleasure. But sickness and trouble are weaning seasons, make this world a

little uneasy, & teach us to review our Evidences for a better. . . . A Soul is never so near God as when abstracted from & mortifyd to all this World; where the little pleasing or seizing accidents of daily Life scarce move the Spirit to joy, or anger, or sorrow, there vertue is upon the improving hand."

In the year 1728 the Universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen honoured themselves by conferring on Watts the degree of Dr. of Divinity.

45. "The mind's the standard of the man."

To the smallness of Watts's stature several allusions have been made in these pages; and his sensitiveness on the subject was only natural. Once when in a coffee-house with some friends he overheard a gentleman enquire the name of "that little man." On being told, the gentleman exclaimed in a loud voice, "What! is that the great Dr. Watts?"

Turning round, Watts repeated reprovingly, and yet good-humouredly, one of the stanzas from his poem "False Greatness."[1]

> "Were I so tall to reach the pole,
> Or grasp the ocean with my span,
> I must be measured by my soul,
> The mind's the standard of the man."

In Watts's works are quite a number of passages on the subject of stature. Thus in *Reliquiae Juveniles* he makes one of his characters say: "It

[1] *Horæ Lyricæ*, vii., p. 255.

is very astonishing to consider upon what trifles or circumstance foolish man is ready to exalt himself above his neighbours: I am even ashamed to think, that when I stand among persons of a low stature, and a mean outward appearance, I am ready to look downward upon their undertakings as beneath my own, because nature has formed my limbs by a larger model, has raised this animal bulk upon higher pillars, and given me a full and florid aspect. Ridiculous thought, and wild imagination! as though the size and colour of the brute were the proper measure to judge of the man!"[1] Oddly enough, a number of his friends, including the Rev. Samuel Harvey[2] and Dr. Benjamin Grosvenor,[3] were also men of very low stature. It was a society of dwarfs. When Harvey died (in 1729), Watts wrote[4]—and the words may be applied to himself—

> "What worlds of worth lay crowded in that breast,
> Too strait the mansion for the illustrious guest."

It was only in the street and other places of public resort that Watts was inconvenienced by his stature. In the pulpit or the parlour the lustre of his mind caused his hearers entirely to forget the blemishes of his person. Although his stature was small, he often touched the clouds with his head.

[1] See also Works, Vol. vii., pp. 310, 409.

[2] Assistant pastor of the chapel in Poor Jewry Lane (now called Jewry Street) under Dr. William Harris. See Wilson i., 82—88.

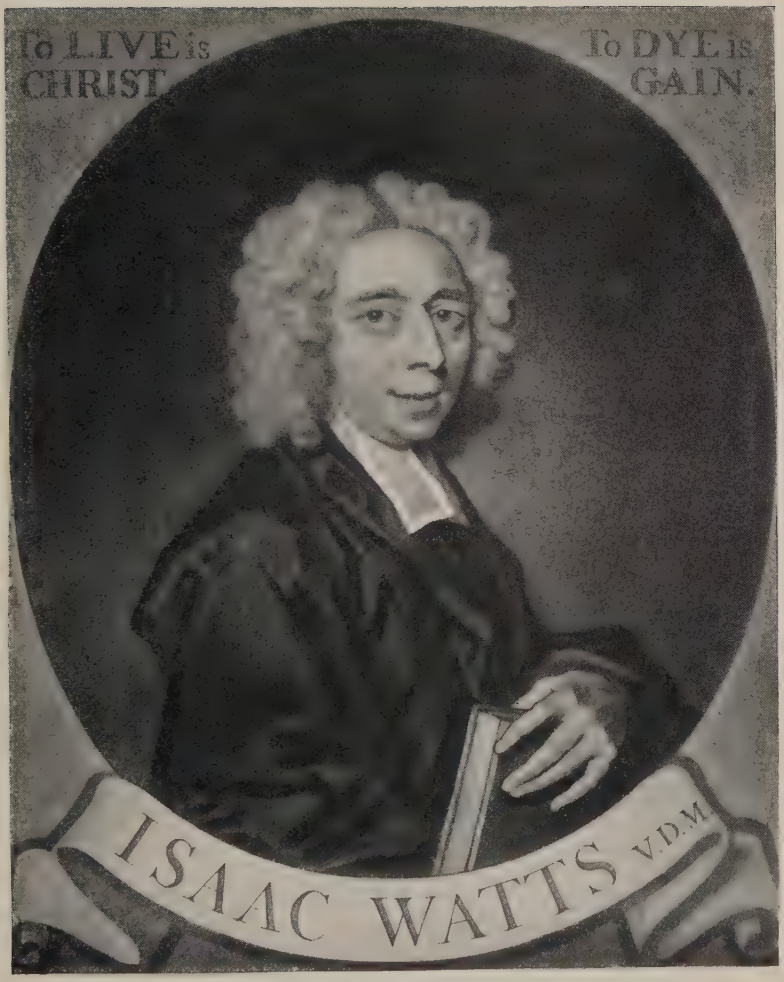
[3] From 1704 to 1709 pastor at Crosby Square. See Wilson i., 344—351.

[4] Works vii., 409; Wilson i., 82.

46. Letter to the Rev. Henry Francis, 19 Mar., 1728.

When the new chapel at Southampton was erected, the minister, the Rev. William Bolar, chose as his assistant a friend of Watts, the Rev. Henry Francis. After some eighteen months Francis, who, unhappy at Southampton, had thoughts of removing, but before taking any step, he consulted Watts who, on 19th March, 1729, replied as follows :—

"Dear Brother Francis,—Your last is now before me with all the long detail of discouragements which you enumerate there. I own many of them to be just, and the future prospects of the Dissenting interest in Southampton, after the lives of some few persons, is somewhat unpleasing and afflictive, if we look merely to appearances. But I have a few things to offer which will in some measure, I hope, reconcile your thoughts to a long continuance among them. 1. Consider how great things God has done for the Dissenting interest in Southampton by your means. . . . 2. There are some persons in whom God has begun a good work . . . by your means. Oh, do not think of forsaking them ! 3. There is scarce any people in England who love their minister and honour and esteem him more than yours do you. . . . 4. Where is the man who is better qualified for carrying on God's work in the town than you are ? 5. If you leave, whither will you go ? The case is the same in many places as it is with you and



In CHRISTO mea Vita latet : mea Gloria CHRISTUS.
Hunc Lingua, Hunc Calamus celebrat, nec Imago tacebit.
IN UNO JESU OMNIA.

G. White ad vivum fec. 1727.

Portrait of Watts taken from life by G. White, 1727.

much worse. 6. Consider whether this be not a temptation thrown in your way to discourage you in your work. 7. Let us remember that we are not engaged in a work that depends all upon reasonings, and prospects, and probabilities, and present appearances, but upon the hand and Spirit of God. If He will work, who shall hinder?

"Farewell, dear Brother: meditate on these things. Turn your thoughts to the objects which are more joyful, and the occasions you have for thankfulness. Praise and thanksgiving are springs to the soul and give it new activity."[1] It is delightful to learn that Francis followed Watts's advice in this beautiful letter, and that he for many years ministered to a steadily increasing congregation, who showed their appreciation of his services by offering him, after the death of Mr. Bolar, the sole charge of the church.

On 28th Sept., 1729, Watts preached at Bury Street a sermon occasioned by the death of a prominent member, Mr. Isaac Field, a good man, "the beginning of whose religious course and the end of it were all of a piece."[2]

In 1729 appeared Watts's admirable book, *The*

[1] For the complete text of this letter, see *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, Feb., 1908.

[2] A manuscript copy of this sermon and various manuscripts written by members of the Field family, are in the possession of Miss K. C. Field, 39 Cambridge Gardens, London, W. One is Watts's *Discourse of Prayer*, taken in shorthand Dec. and Jan., 1710, "as it was delivered in several occasional speeches," and transcribed by Isaac Field. It appeared in 1716 as *A Guide to Prayer*, Works iv., p. 114.

47. The Doctrine of the Passions. Fear again. 1729.

Doctrine of the Passions.[1] Whatever the reader overpasses in this essay he should pause at and ponder the golden sections 21 to 24, where the author is again on his great subject, "Fear," the subject that he presses upon us with such curious insistence. After mentioning that one of the best antidotes to fear is diversion of the mind, he says[2]: "Remember that all creatures in heaven and earth are under God's power and supreme government; they can go no further than He permits them, nor can they hurt a hair of your head without His leave. And if He suffers calamities to fall upon you, He can make them turn to your unspeakable advantage. Have a care of contracting new guilt, by indulging sin of any kind, or by the neglect of duty. Think what a dishonour it is to God for you to set up creatures as the objects of your unreasonable fears, as though they were not in His hand, or as though God, the Creator, were not a sufficient refuge. . . . Think how many needless fears you have had in time past, and tormented yourself with them—groundless fears where there was no danger, fears of things that never came to pass"[3]—again the Worry

[1] He defines the Passions as, "The Soul's sensations of some commotions in the body arising from the perception of peculiar objects." He confines himself to the 17 Primitive Passions. John Ryland, who largely followed Watts, puts the number of our Powers at 10, of our Primitive Passions at 17, and our Compound Passions at 59.

[2] Works ii., 253.

[3] Cf. Jeremy Taylor: "It is usually not so much the greatness of our trouble, as the littleness of our spirit, which makes us complain."

Book[1] idea. "Suppose," he continues, "the worst that can come[2], and be prepared for it by faith in Christ, hope in God, a life of virtue and piety, a serene conscience, and a continual readiness for death itself. . . . Arise[3] and shake off this heavy clog, break these fetters of the soul, constrain yourself to activity of some kind or other, if it be but in the way of amusement. Divert the mind this way from the dark and mournful ideas that press upon it. . . . Think with yourself, when you receive some high provocation, that God places you at that hour under special trial, and He waits to see what honour you will do to His grace and His gospel, and whether the flesh or the spirit will come off conqueror. . . . There is scarce any prohibition in all the Bible more frequently repeated than 'Fear not.'"

In the summer of 1729 Watts composed *The World to Come*, part of which was written at Tunbridge Wells. In the previous year had died his friend, the Rev. Caleb Wroe,[4] minister at Crossbrook Chapel, Cheshunt, close, it will be remembered, to Lady Abney's home, Theobalds; and on 12th Nov., 1729, the Rev. John Oakes, another of his friends, was ordained in Wroe's place. Watts wrote for the occasion an "Address to Ministers," founded on

48. An Humble Address, 12 Nov., 1729. John Hurrion. Death of Jabez Hughes, 17 Jan., 1731.

[1] See § 40. [2] Works ii., 254. [3] Works ii., 258.

[4] Wroe published anonymously, *Four Letters to a Friend*. By a Country Minister, 1725.

Col. iv. 17, but being prevented by illness from attending, he enlarged his manuscript, and finally published it in 1731 as *An Humble Address*, &c. The book is described in an earlier chapter as part of a trilogy, of which the *Logic* is the first member, and *The Improvement of the Mind* the third. It is, indeed, a banquet for the soul, the central delicacy being: "You who have walked with God so long through this wilderness, and have been fed, and clothed, and supported all the way, who have been delivered from many enemies and many dangers, who have been carried through multitudes of difficulties, and have had rich experiences of the grace and mercy of God through all your pilgrimage, can you not rejoice in Him, trust Him in this last stage of life, and venture through death and the grave leaning upon His arm!"[1]

Admirable as was this work in the main, and rich in stimulating passages, as were the other works of Watts's middle period, all of them gave some uneasiness to Trinitarians. The animadversions of Bradbury have been referred to, but Watts was attacked under this head by a far deeper though not more trenchant writer, namely, the Rev. John Hurrion,[2] of Hare Court Chapel, Aldersgate, one of the keenest theologians of the century. Like Watts's life Hurrion's was one of

[1] Works vii., 106.
[2] See Wilson iii., 288—296.

REV. DR. THOMAS GIBBONS.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

agony; but whereas Watts, thin and spare, was a martyr to insomnia, Hurrion, huge and unwieldy—a man-mountain—suffered from dropsy. Like Watts, he led the life of a sedentary recluse. In a series of sixteen sermons preached at Pinners' Hall, 1729—1731, and afterwards published as *The Scripture Doctrine of the proper Divinity, real Personality and the extraordinary Works of the Holy Spirit stated and defended*, he,[1] in Toplady's words, "totally demolished Dr. Watts's fanciful surmises." Watts's position was also efficaciously attacked by Dr. Abraham Taylor in a tract, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity vindicated, in opposition to Mr. Watts's Scheme of one Divine Person and two Divine Powers.*

49. The Cause at Olney, 23 Feb., 1732.

In the earlier part of this book reference was made to the sufferings of the Dissenters under Charles II. and James II., to their deliverance under William III., to the recrudescence of the persecution spirit under Anne, and to the final triumph of Protestantism under George I. Strangely enough, with the cessation of persecution, the energy, and consequently the power, of the Dissenters sensibly declined; and the Dissenting writers themselves, while lauding their ministers and people under the Stuarts, record sadly the incapacity and torpor of the former and the numerical weakness of the latter, under the early Georges. The letter of

[1] Hurrion died 31st Dec., 1731.

Watts to Francis in 1728, reveals that its writer was troubled by this state of affairs. And his fears had only too strong a foundation, for in some of the towns—Thame, Princes Risborough and Olney, for instance—the meeting-houses were closed and the congregations scattered. It became clear to Watts that unless energetic measures were taken, Nonconformity would totally disappear from the villages and the smaller towns. He therefore consulted with other London ministers and with Doddridge, and schemes were drawn up for the assistance of the country churches. In particular his thoughts were directed to Olney. The Independent Church in this town was an offshoot from a Baptist Church which had been founded in the days of Charles II. Under persecution both Churches had thrived, under liberty both sickened. In the case of the Independent Church, there was a temporary revival during the pastorate of the Rev. Thomas Gibbons, who was ordained 22nd Sept., 1721, and who seems to have left the town about 1730.[1] On his removal the cause dwindled to nothing and finally the chapel was closed. The Baptists in the town suffered in the same way, and eventually their chapel was closed also.[1] In one of the Church Books of College Street Chapel, Northampton, is the curious entry, "Seven men

[1] From 28th June, 1733 to 1758, he was minister at Royston, Herts.

[2] The Baptist Church was re-founded on 15th Nov., 1738, by thirteen men and women who had removed to Olney from Walgrave, in the county of Northants.

LIBRARY ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

at Olney wrote complaining of want of soul-food." They might have written to the same effect as late as 1732, for with a mere man of the world as church clergyman,[1] and both chapels closed, matters could scarcely have been worse. The revival of religion in the town was owing largely to the efforts of Doddridge and two other ministers, John Drake, of Yardley Hastings, and William Hunt, of Newport Pagnell, who, after re-opening the chapel, which they supplied in turns, applied to Dr. Watts for further guidance. The love and veneration with which the chapellers of Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire,—poor men in smock frocks and hobnailed boots, and poor women in cloaks and pattens—regarded Watts is strikingly illustrated by a letter of Doddridge to Watts. "On Wednesday last," he says,[2] "I was preaching in a barn to a pretty large assembly of plain country people at a village a few miles off. After a sermon we sang one of your hymns—'Give me the wings of faith to rise'—and in that part of the worship I had the satisfaction to observe tears in the eyes of several of the auditory, and after the service was over some of them told me that they were not able to sing, so deeply were their minds affected with it; and the clerk in particular told me that he could hardly utter the words of it. . . . When one of the company

[1] Rev. Henry Kelly, Vicar of Olney, 1718—1735.
[2] May, 1731.

said, 'What if Dr. Watts should come down to Northampton?' another replied with remarkable warmth, 'The very sight of him would be like an ordinance to me!'"

Of the correspondence between Doddridge and Watts in reference to the cause at Olney, only one letter—the first, dated 23rd Feb., 1732—has been preserved. It is signed by Hunt and Drake as well as by Doddridge. "The Dissenters of Olney," it runs, "have for some time been extremely fond of lay preachers on the Antinomian strain, and have entertained very strong prejudices against all the regular ministers in these parts; nevertheless, there are a few amongst them who are persons of great candour and good sense, as well as eminent piety; these have invited us over to preach a lecture here once a month, and we have each of us taken our turns, according to the advice of Dr. Watts and some other friends in town. We have found a very numerous auditory. . . . A great many of these are Churchmen, who express very high satisfaction in what they hear; and, indeed, considering the character of the clergyman of the town on the one hand, and that of many of his people on the other, it seems probable that several of them would come over to the Dissenters if a regular minister were fixed here, and some of them have not scrupled expressly to declare it."

After putting forward the hope that the lecture

would be the means of fixing a regular minister at Olney, the letter concludes: "We cannot, dear Sir, conclude this address to you without assuring you that it is matter of abundant joy to us that the great Lord of the Church is pleased to continue your life, health, and extensive usefulness."

As a result of the efforts of Dr. Watts and the three signatories to the letter, the Independents of Olney took heart, their church was re-established, and the Rev. John Drake, who became its pastor, ministered for many years to a flourishing cause.

In 1731 Watts, whose labours still continued to be interrupted by sickness, issued his book, *The Strength and Weakness of Human Reason.* Among those to whom he sent it was Dr. Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, and this was the commencement of a long and agreeable correspondence between the two divines. The Bishop used to send Watts all his pastoral letters, and Watts presented the Bishop with a copy of each of his works as they came out.

On 20th March, 1732, died Miss Sarah Abney, Lady Abney's eldest daughter, and Watts, on 2nd April, 1732, "improved" the event by a sermon delivered at Bury Street,[1] which afterwards formed part of *The World to Come.*

In 1733, the Presbyterians of Cheshunt united themselves with the church at Crossbrook, under the Rev. John Oakes, and it was decided to hold a

[1] See Works v., 493.

public and solemn service in order to mark the occasion. Watts, who was asked to preach, made the attempt, but owing to his weakness he was unable to finish his discourse ;[1] and he once more quitted the pulpit for the sick bed.

50. Make Prayer a Pleasure. 1734.

Soon after his recovery he composed his *Reliquiae Juveniles: Miscellaneous Thoughts . . . written chiefly in Younger Years*, which he dedicated by the medium of a graceful letter to the Countess of Hertford ("Eusebia"). Many pleasing letters then passed between Watts and the Countess, and No. 63 of the *Reliquiae* contains a tribute to her culture and excellent taste. The trend of the book may be judged by two citations. "Make prayer a pleasure and not a task," says Watts, "and then you will never forget or omit it;" "Live as a stranger here on earth, but as a citizen of heaven, if you will maintain a soul at ease." Nothing in the book gave Mrs. Rowe more pleasure than the description of the "Temple of the Sun," which, she says, "is really fine," but to the "Thankful Philosopher" she also paid a glowing tribute.

[1] *A Sketch of the History of the Congregational Church at Crossbrook, Cheshunt*. The sermon was printed, however, and a few copies of it are still in the hands of collectors.

CHAPTER XIII

1ST NOV., 1734—31ST DEC., 1740

WITH THE ABNEYS AT STOKE NEWINGTON

Among the wealthier of the Nonconformists in those days was Mr. William Coward, of Walthamstow, with whom Watts, as the leading Independent minister in London, had considerable influence. In 1734 Coward expressed his resolve to set aside £20,000 for the purpose of founding a Dissenting College; and it was suggested that the first two tutors should be Watts's friends, John Eames and Philip Doddridge. Coward, however, was so eccentric, so whimsical, that it was doubted whether the project would ever be put into execution. His various foibles often proved inconvenient to his friends—his rule, for example, that his doors should be closed punctually at eight every evening. Even invited guests, if they arrived "beyond the hour," were refused admittance, and had to spend the night either at some other private house or at an inn. Doddridge's pupil and friend, the Rev. Hugh Farmer—Demonology Farmer, from the subjects of his books,—who was once treated in this way, has

51. William Coward; William Duncombe, 1734.

left some curious references to both Watts and Coward. Writing to Doddridge on 14th July, 1737, he says, "Mr. Coward begins to think Dr. Watts a Baxterian, and is almost come to an open rupture with you. [Apparently on account of Doddridge's friendship with Watts] . . . If we may credit Mr. Coward himself, he is at present in the most flourishing state of life, his judgment is as clear and as strong as ever, and he can, with ease, recollect all the transactions of importance that concerned himself since he was half-a-year old. He is now employing his genius in digging canals, erecting stately edifices, in planting gardens; and, in order to set off his work, he has bought a statue of King William on horseback!" Such was the indomitable William Coward at 89. He died in the following year; and, notwithstanding all fears to the contrary, a great part of his property was left in trust "for the education and training of young men . . . . among the Protestant Dissenters"; and Watts was named one of the four trustees. The income of the Coward Trusts, which was for some time divided between Doddridge's Academy at Northampton and an educational institute in Well-close Square, London, is now used for the maintenance of New College, St. John's Wood.

In 1734 and 1735 ensued an interesting correspondence between Watts and William Duncombe, dramatist, translator, and miscellaneous writer,

Portrait from the "Gospel Magazine," June, 1779.

who had married the sister of Watts's college friend, John Hughes,[1] and who had collected and issued in two volumes Hughes's poems.[2] On receiving a copy of the work,"[3] Watts says (23rd May, 1735), they were "joyfully read by me the next day after I saw you. Methinks I see the very man, my old acquaintance, there with his temper and softness, his wit and sprightly genius, spreading almost over every page." On 9th Mar., 1736, Watts is found performing the mournful duty of condoling with Duncombe on the death of Mrs. Duncombe, his letter[4] running:

"Newington,

"March 9th, 1735/6.

"Sir,—Your great Loss on ye departure of Mrs. Duncombe and the frame of Spirit w^oh^ breathes thro her letter, give a sort of Contrast of Passions. There is pleasure in ye midst of pain derived from ye Contemplations of an absent friend in ye midst of happy Spirits. May her God & her Bible & her hope, be all your Comforters. fforgive me, Sir, if I speak a free thought of my heart to you. Our Nation in ye polite part of it are gone so far into Deism, or into such a Sort of Christianity as is next kin to it, that when I am introduced into

[1] Hughes died, as already recorded, in 1720.

[2] He afterwards edited the works of other authors, including those of the Rev. Samuel Say (1745). His edition of *Horace* appeared in 1757. He died in 1769 at the age of 80.

[3] Jabez Hughes (John Hughes's brother), who is also referred to by Watts, was author of a Translation of *Suetonius's Lives of the Twelve Cæsars* (1717). He died 17th Jan., 1731, *æt.* 46.

[4] Hitherto unpublished.

ye acquaintance of any polite Writers of ye Age, I know not whether they are Christians or no, till they discover it to me. Tis with much Satisfaction therefore I read your transcript of your Wives letter, as it declares her sentiments & rejoices you: And tis with a sort of Surprise I read, that you have spent many more hours in the Study of Divinity than of Poesy. I may presume then that the little piece which encloses this letter will not be utterly unacceptable to you, though ye Author has concealed his Name. Twas written to preserve the Christianity of the New Testament.

"Your Tragedy of Esther w^h^ some Short hints of cursory remark, lyes by me waiting your Call, or your order. I shall be glad to see you whensoever your affairs & your health will permitt you to make a visit with your Son[1] to Newington. On a Wednesday we dine at 2 a clock. I wish you, Sir; for your boys sake & for ye Worlds, a perfect recovery. And may so painfull a Loss as you have lately sustained awaken such pious & Devout sentiments in you, that may render the remnant of Life abundantly usefull. I am, Sir; with Sincere wishes of your happiness in this & a future World

"Your obed^t^ humble Servt

"I. Watts."

In the summer of 1736 Watts heard with joy of

[1] Afterwards the Rev. John Duncombe, M.A.

an amazing revival of religion in New England as the result of the preaching of Jonathan Edwards, and he asked Dr. Colman, of Boston, for further particulars. As the result of the enquiry, Jonathan Edwards wrote his *Faithful Narrative of the surprising work of God in the Conversion of many hundred souls . . . of New Hampshire*, which was published in this country at the instance of Watts and Dr. John Guise.

About the same time Lady Abney and her daughters took up their abode at Stoke Newington[1] (afterwards called Abney) House, Dr. Watts accompanying them; and so it came about that he found himself once more on the spot on which, as recorded early in this work, he had anticipated spending many happy hours, though the friend—Thomas Gunston—with whom he had hoped to spend them had been dead thirty-two years. When Watts settled with Lady Abney at Newington, he had reached his 61st year, and was beginning to feel the infirmities of old age, though he grew old with good grace. However, quite a long period of happiness still lay before him. Many thoughts of former days must have crowded his mind when he walked again through the various handsome apartments of the house, and traversed the beautiful grounds—when, for instance, he ascended the grand staircase and entered "the

52. Abney Park, 1736.

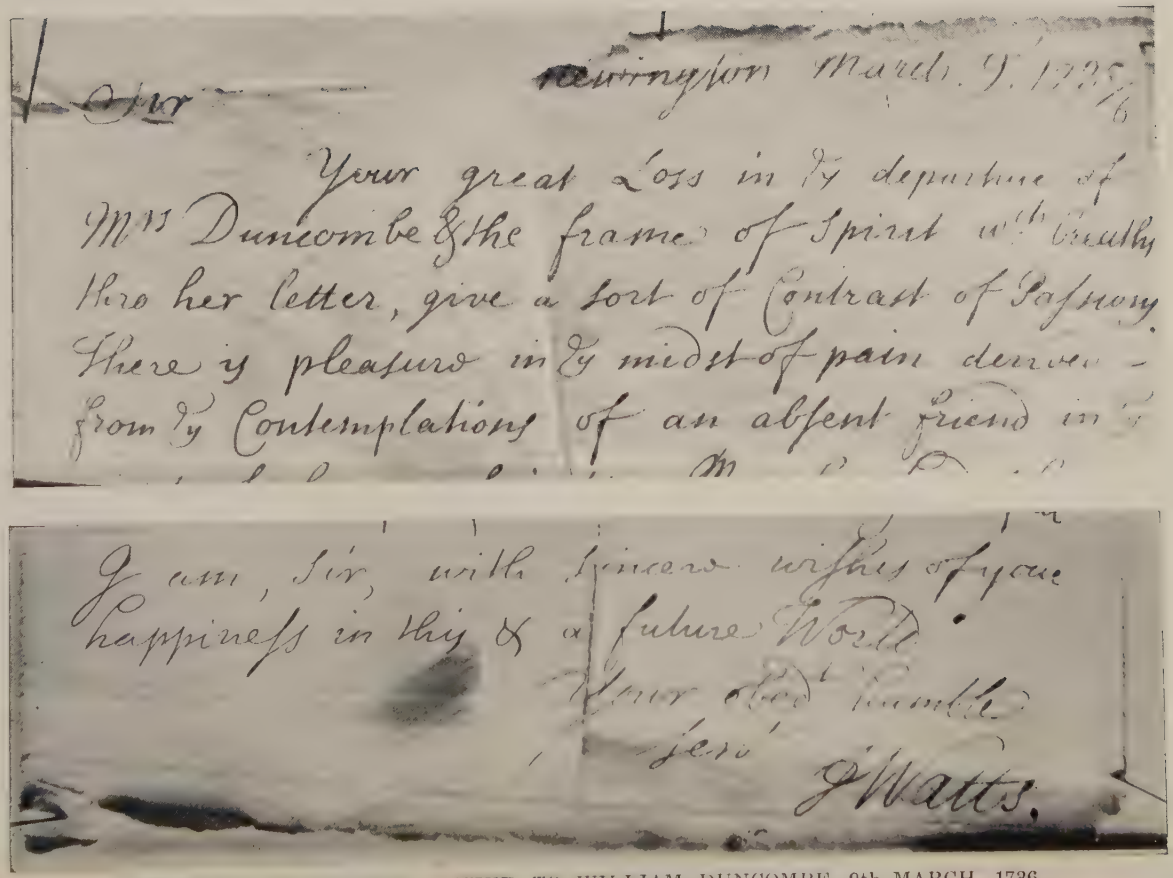
[1] Newington was still only a village. As late as 1842 it had only 400 houses.

Painted Room" with its gilt mouldings and its panels painted with subjects from Ovid, including the Actaeon and Stag over the mantel-piece, with the swan which he himself had added to the picture, and the shutters which were covered with subjects from his brush; when he walked once more in the shade of the cedars and the yews, in the wilderness, or by the line of reverend elms where he and Gunston had so often exchanged ideas respecting the masterpieces of Latin and English literature; or when his eyes wandered to the gilded ball that crowned the turret and flashed in the sunlight. The room assigned to Watts as a study, which was on the right on entering the hall,[1] and was panelled with oak, soon took the colour of its occupier's mind. Over the entrance he hung a passage from Horace's Satires (Book i.), "Absentem qui rodit . . . tu Romane caveto," which may be rendered:

> "He who, malignant, stabs an absent friend,
> Or fears when others censure, to defend,
> Who loves the loud and senseless laugh to raise,
> Who lies, and readily his trust betrays;
> In his foul bosom guilt's black demons lie;
> His baleful converse, cautious Briton, fly."

On the portions of the panelling that were not hidden by books he hung prints of John Owen, John Flavel, and other favourite authors; and on one side of the panel over the fireplace he caused

[1] Mrs. S. C. Hall. See her article in *The Art Union Monthly Journal*, 1848.



PORTIONS OF WATTS'S LETTER TO WILLIAM DUNCOMBE, 9th MARCH, 1736.

to be written in bold letters Horace's line, "Locus est pluribus umbris,"[1] which may be rendered, "There are a good many pictures of notable persons round about;" and on the other side, "Quis me doctorum propriâ dignabitur umbrâ?" that is to say, "Would anybody like to give me another?" And now and again someone enjoying the pleasantry, or desiring to be great with Watts, took the gentle hint and sent him an additional picture.

As at Theobalds, so at Abney Park, much of his life was spent out of doors. He was still an early riser. He still loved to see the eyelids of the morning. The garden with its arbours tapestried with roses, its walks, its flower-beds, its peacocks, was a continual joy to him. On the mound, Watts's Mount as it came to be called, he loved to sit and meditate, and to withdraw into the inner cabinet of his mind. A chestnut tree now rises from it, the successor, doubtless, of a much older tree, at whose foot it is pleasant to imagine him writing that elegant song in *Reliquiæ Juveniles*, "Come, pretty birds, fly to this verdant shade." Long before, recalling the charm of the Abney Park mound in Gunston's time, he had imagined a similar eminence in heaven:

> "There on a green and flowery mount
> Our weary souls shall sit;"[2]

[1] *Epistles*, Book i., Ep. 5, line 28.
[2] Hymns, Book 2, hymn 53.

and in a poem, "The Vision,"[1] in which also he describes heaven, he speaks of a company resting

> "On a green mount for pleasure made,
> With flowers enamell'd round."

It is delightful to picture Watts in so beautiful a spot as Abney Park. He was surely thinking of his own favoured situation when he wrote:

> "For him thy power a mansion-seat prepared,
> Well situate on the choicest spot of earth,
> Stored with all sorts of richest furniture,
> And trains of servants."[2]

Here indeed he led an ideal life—that, almost, of Adam in Eden, with the advantage that there was no snake on the grounds, though as we shall see, there were snakes hard by of the human kind who hissed at him outside the Park gates[3] and thrust their forky tongues between the substantial bars. Watts's happiness at Abney Park was also enhanced by the fact that in living there he had for neighbour his old friend John Eames.

Lady Abney and Watts being Dissenters were subjected to various petty persecutions; thus we hear of her ladyship being fined with others for "Defficiencys in the Church Rate." In 1730 for example she had been a fellow sufferer under this head with Daniel Defoe,[4] who then resided at Newington, the entry in the Church Book running:

Lady Abney	...	...	£2 6 8
Deffoe	...	...	13 4

[1] Posthumous Works, Vol. i., p. 59. [2] Posthumous Works i., 106.
[3] These gates may still be seen in Church Street.
[4] Defoe died in 1731.

Having arrived at fame, Watts was visited by many persons of distinction, who eagerly seized the opportunity of improving their minds and warming their hearts by conversation with so rare an intellect. To devote an hour to Watts, to listen to the thin, worn prophet, as, in a Chinese-looking gown[1], wig and band, "he talked of the great things of life and death," was considered by not a few as spending it in the highest luxury that a human soul was capable of receiving. Watts doubtless owed part of his charm to having been so much in the company of Lady Abney and other cultured women, for to use the words of one of his contemporaries and admirers:[2] "Frequent conversation with women harmonizes the souls of men and gives them that enchanting grace which has so often delighted us." One of his visitors was the pious Count Zinzendorf. The conversation, carried on in Latin, was chiefly on the subject of the persecuted Moravian and Bohemian churches to whom Zinzendorf had given refuge in his small dominion, and the "wondrous conversions" in New England, to which reference has already been made; and Zinzendorf, who was about to transplant and to accompany some of his Moravians to Georgia, felt inclined to visit also the scene of the conversions. Writing to a New England friend on

[1] It is preserved at New College, London, N
[2] J. G. Cooper.

Dec. 21st, 1738, Watts,[1] referring to the Count, says: "He is a person of uncommon zeal and piety, and of an evangelical spirit. He has pursued learning in several Universities. . . . If he should visit you I persuade myself you will show him all Christian civilities, and offices of love, which so excellent and honourable a character deserves."

As in his lodgings in Minories, and as at Theobalds, Watts at Abney Park walked with God. He wept and prayed in secret there, as he had wept and prayed in his "technophyon" at Mr. Hollis's. In referring to the Almighty, he generally used the expression, "My gracious God." To the quickness of his temper, the result, as he so often tells us, of the excess of sharp juices "which had early mingled with his blood," reference has already been made. This idea of his that the vices of men are largely attributable to the ferment of their blood, he thought was supported by the resemblance of pride displayed by the peacock and the well-fed horse.[2] The trouble, however, caused by his own "juices" he had been able to counterbalance by means of an abstemious diet, supplication, and self-control. Nowhere in his works, or in the anecdotes of him, would it be possible to find one angry remark made respecting any man. He exhibited towards

[1] Letter printed in the *Congregational Magazine*, Dec., 1836.
[2] Works ii., p. 111.

ABNEY HOUSE.

THE STAIRCASE, ABNEY HOUSE.

Both pictures drawn and engraved by J. and H. S. Storer.
Published by Sherwood & Co., December 1st, 1822.

those with whom he came into contact the tenderness of an amiable and beautiful woman. He was, as would be judged from what has been said on the subject of his *Divine Songs*, particularly gentle with children; and the books of instruction and the little poems which he wrote for them are eloquent both of the sincerity of his regard for them, and also of his desire for their happiness, temporal and spiritual. His amiable deportment disarmed his enemies. To know him was to love him. On the poor he bestowed one third of his annual income, which amounted to about a hundred a year.

Soon after settling at Abney Park he put together the pleasant series of papers, which were afterwards published as *Remnants of Time*,[1] some of which consist of several of the most beautiful productions of the heathen world converted to Christian purposes, as, for example, Horace's Ode 29, Book iii.[2] But of these labours he soon tired. "Alas! my friend," he wrote to Say, "I am grown into years, and though part of the critic lives yet the poet is almost expired."[3]

Early in 1737 he went down to Southampton in order to visit his father, whose life (he was 86) was drawing rapidly to a close. The return journey was made on horseback, his father's servant, Richard

53. Death of his Father 10 Feb., 1737.

[1] Works vii., p. 430.
[2] Works vii., p. 34.
[3] Jan. 28th, 1736.

Ellcock, accompanying him part of the way, and Watts, who never allowed any opportunity for sowing good seed to escape him, made, by his conversation as they rode together, a deep and lasting impression on the man, and was the means of his "sound and saving conversion."

On Feb. 8th, 1737, Watts wrote to his father:

"Honoured and dear Sir, 'tis now ten days since I heard from you, and learned by my nephews that you had been recovered from a very threatening illness. When you are in danger of life, I believe my sister is afraid to let me know the worst, for fear of affecting me too much. But as I feel old age[1] daily advancing on myself, I am endeavouring to be ready for my removal hence. . . . I hope you feel those satisfactions of soul on the borders of life, which nothing can give but this gospel, which you taught us all in our younger years. May these Divine consolations support your spirits, under all your growing infirmities; and may our blessed Saviour form your soul to such a heavenly frame, that you may wait with patience amid the languors of life, for a joyful passage into the land of immortality"—a curious letter—for it is not often one hears of a man referring to his infirmities, the result of old age, in a letter to his own father. Two days later the elder Watts died, and his son improved the event in a sermon from Zech. i. 5, "Your fathers, where are they?" delivered at Bury Street.

[1] Watts was 62.

While Watts was preparing this sermon, his friend, Mrs. Rowe, lay dying. During her last years she wrote several works, including *Letters Moral and Entertaining*, Part 1, 1729; Part 2, 1731; Part 3, 1733; and *The History of Joseph*,[1] 1736, in each of which her passionate love for her late husband is distinctly reflected, though it is transferred to the Saviour; but her principal title to fame was the composition of the beautiful hymn, "Thou didst, O mighty God, exist."[2] Her works were translated into several of the continental languages, and in Germany, especially, they were very popular. Klopstock often refers to "Die himmlische und fromme Singer,"[3] and "Die göttliche Rowe."[4] Wieland was equally her admirer. As Watts's *Horæ Lyricæ* had been her delight in her hey-day, so it was her comfort in her last hours, and she often repeated the lines:—

54. Death of Mrs. Rowe, 20 Feb., 1737. The World to Come. Martin Tomkins.

> "Oh, if my threatening sins were gone
> And Death had lost his sting;
> I could invite the angel on
> And chide his lazy wing."[5]

Eventually she was comforted with the belief that her sins were removed, for she wrote, "'Tis my

[1] Founded on Fracastorius's poem, "The Maiden's Blush, or Joseph," translated by Joshua Sylvester. The nurse's name, "Iphicle," is the same in both poems, and there are other resemblances.

[2] Sometimes printed, "Thou didst, great Triune God, exist."

[3] The heavenly and pious Singer. [4] The godly Rowe.

[5] *Horæ Lyricæ*, "The Welcome Messenger," Works, Vol. vii., p. 231.

greatest joy to think that the shadows of the evening are lengthening, and that the closing part, the last important moment, will soon arrive. O may my sun set in smiles ; " and then she repeated Watts's lines :—

> " Lo ! I behold the scattering shades,
> The dawn of heaven appears ;
> The sweet immortal morning spreads
> Its blushes round the spheres."

She died on 20th Feb. 1737, at the age of 63,[1] and was buried in the meeting-house at Frome. In her cabinet was found after her death a packet containing the MS. of a work entitled, *Devout Exercises of the Heart*, and a letter directed to Watts, who was requested to revise the work and publish it. As the last message of the Puritan Sappho to the man who had once been her lover, and who had subsequently been her devoted friend and counsellor, this letter is not without pathos.

" The opinion I have had of your piety and judgment," she said, " is the reason of my giving you the trouble of looking over these papers in order to publish them. . . . The reflections were occasionally written, and only for my own

[1] There are four portraits of Mrs. Rowe :—

(*a*) Half length, nearly full face, oval frame with ornaments. Frontispiece to her works, 1739. Engraved by G. Vertue.

(*b*) Copy from the above. Plain oval frame. Plate to Gibbons's *Lives of Pious Women*, 1777.

(*c*) Half length, looking to left. Oval plate to *Lady's Monthly Magazine*, published by Vernor and Hood, 1803. Stipple. $3\frac{3}{8}$ by $2\frac{5}{8}$. Engraved by Mackenzie.

(*d*) Bust looking to right. Oval. In title to her *Poetical Works*, published by Sutterby in 1820. Line $1\frac{3}{4}$ by $1\frac{3}{8}$. Engraved by Engleheart.

improvement; but I am not without hopes that they may have the same effect on some pious minds, as the reading experiences of others has had on my own soul. . . . I have now done with mortal things, and all to come is vast eternity. . . . I expect eternal life, not as a reward of merit, but as a pure act of bounty. . . . While you are reading these lines I shall be adoring before the throne of God, where faith shall be turned into vision, and these languishing desires satisfied with the full fruition of immortal love. Adieu. ELIZABETH ROWE."

Touched to the heart by the perusal of this letter, Watts at once set about the preparation of the MS. for the press. In reference to Mrs. Rowe's impassioned manner of writing, he says prefatorily, "This style, I confess, is raised above that of common meditation or soliloquy; but let it be remembered she was no common Christian. As her virtues were sublime, so her genius was bright and sparkling; and the vivacity of her imagination had a tincture of the muse almost from childhood." Some of his subsequent remarks show, however, that he regarded Mrs. Rowe's language as almost too rapturous; but he concludes, "I hope all serious readers may find something here, which through the aids of the blessed Spirit, may . . . give a new spring to their religious pleasures and their immortal hopes, and thereby render their lives more

holy and heavenly." To link the names of the two authors has been the delight of all who speak of them. Dr. Johnson's tribute to their memories is as beautiful as it is deserved. "Human eulogies are vain," he said, to such saintly writers as Mrs. Rowe and Dr. Watts, who are "applauded by angels and numbered with the just."[1] The work was dedicated to the Countess of Hertford (Eusebia). "It is comfortable," she says in a letter to Watts (June 6th, 1738), "to find that there are still enough of such well-disposed minds as to encourage Mrs. Rowe's Meditations, which certainly breathe as sincere a spirit of piety as can be met with in any writing." The letter also contains the usual news, that Lord Hertford had had another "severe fit of the gout," to which is added, that her Ladyship could not hope "to see him able to walk again."

While Watts was engaged on the pious duty of publishing Mrs. Rowe's work, the country was being agitated by the preaching of George Whitefield, who had boldly set up the standard of Free Grace. "The Holy Spirit," he said, "is working in the 18th century as He had worked in the 1st. It has fallen to me to fight for the doctrine of Regeneration as Luther had fought for that of Justification by Faith." Soul on fire he called on Watts at Abney Park.

"I am a new man," he said excitedly; "the

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Ed. of 1823, Vol. i., p. 258.

Holy Spirit has singled me out for a great work!"

"Are you sure," inquired Watts calmly, "that the impression is Divine? Let me warn you against the danger of delusion, and to guard against the irregularities and imprudences to which youth and zeal may lead you. Though I believe you are very sincere and that you desire to do good to souls, yet I am not convinced of any extraordinary call you have to some parts of your conduct."

In the course of the year Whitefield, who drew enormous crowds by his preaching in Moorfields and Kennington Common, issued his epochal sermon on Regeneration, and in August he was attacked in a pastoral letter by the Bishop of London, Dr. Secker, who had no sympathy with what he called the "new gospel." The Bishop, however, while encouraging his clergy to preach Justification by Faith, fell into the amazing error of urging them also to impress upon their hearers that good works are a necessary condition of their being justified; either forgetting or ignoring the fact that the Church of England in her Articles expressly teaches that good works are a *result not a means* of grace, and that the opposite doctrine is clean contrary to Holy Scripture, and he sent a copy of his Pastoral to Watts. Watts, with his mischievous amiability and in his quixotic desire to minimise the differences between Christians, wrote politely to the Bishop (Aug. 15th,

1739), and expressed himself in general agreement with the trend of the charge. Respecting the passage on the subject of good works he was mute. Whitefield, however, did not hesitate to pit against the Bishop and the contradictoriness of the Pastoral the Apostle Paul and the precision of the viii.th of Romans. "Yours, my Lord," he flung in for finish, "is the new gospel!"

It is clear, however, that Watts had an uneasy feeling that in these matters he had not been very courageous, for one day when in the company of several other ministers he was asked what he thought of Whitefield, he replied: "My opinion is that Whitefield does more good by his wild notes than we do with our set music."

That Watts's sympathy with Whitefield continued to increase rather than to diminish is evidenced by the general tenor of his *Evangelical Discourses*, and especially Discourse 12, "The extraordinary Witness of the Spirit,"[1] a work published in 1747, the penultimate year of his life. As for the Bishop (amiable old lady!), he had nothing more to say except that "From the time men imagine themselves to be singled out by God for extraordinary purposes, all human advice is lost upon them." Which, of course, is very sad; though, unfortunately, the only men who have achieved anything in this world have been enthusiasts and fanatics.

[1] Works ii., p. 99.

THE GROVE OF CEDARS AND YEWS in Abney Park.

DR. WATTS'S STUDY, Abney Park.

DR. WATTS'S MOUNT, Abney Park.

STATUE OF DR. WATTS, Abney Park Cemetery.

These pictures, by F. W. Fairholt, F.S.A., illustrated an article by Mrs. S. C. Hall, which appeared in "The Art Union Monthly Journal," 1848.

In 1739 Watts published the first part of *The World to Come*, a work in which he endeavoured to place "the great and most momentous things of a future world in the most convincing and affecting light, and to enforce them upon the conscience with all the fervour that such subjects demand and require." Of all his works this attracted during his lifetime the most attention, and the first discourse, "The End of Time," has often been reprinted. "How pleasant is it," wrote Dr. Colman to him, "to see you finishing your course with the present subject, *The World to Come!* 'The End of Time,' 'The Watchful Christian,' &c. I think you never wrote nor did I ever read discourses more adapted to young and old, high and low. In such a flame one would wish to expire. I am ready to say on it, 'It is finished!' Yet may you live to add more." Among those who obtained this work was Dr. Cotton Mather, and Dr. Colman calling one day on the poor old man, found him fondling it with his fingers, but unable to read it owing to the dimness of his eyes. Lady Hertford called it one of the best works she ever saw.[1] The second part of *The World to Come* did not appear till 1745. For long Watts's life had been a life in death, and it was natural that as age, accompanied by decrepitude, advanced, his thoughts should be directed more and more to the solemn subjects of death and eternity. People

[1] Letter to Watts, June, 1739.

have turned with some curiosity to the two parts of this work in order to learn the opinions of so great a man on the life beyond. They have closed the book with mixed feelings. With feelings of gratitude because it contains many a helpful thought; with feelings of regret because it reveals Watts at his old and ill-advised practice of groping after the invisible, of endeavouring to explain the inexplicable. Again and again he tripped at the same stone.

One of the unhappy results of his curiosity respecting hidden things was that it led other writers to pounce upon his statements, and to use them in support of contentions which were far beyond anything that he approved. The Rev. Martin Tomkins, for example, of "Sober Turk or an Indian" fame[1], published in 1737 a pamphlet, entitled, *A calm Enquiry whether we have any warrant from Scripture, for addressing ourselves, in a way of Prayer or Praise, directly to the Holy Spirit*, &c. In it he frequently refers to Dr. Watts's publications; and he, in support of his own views, quotes the passage in *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*,[2] "There is in Scripture no express precept for addressing such worship to the Spirit, nor any examples of it, therefore this ought not to be considered as a necessary part of Christian worship." Watts, nevertheless, thought it lawful to address the Spirit, because the Spirit or power

[1] See § 37. [2] Watts's Works, Vol. v.

of God is truly Divine; and expedient, because the omission of doxologies to the Spirit would be highly offensive to serious Christians who had been accustomed to them, and injurious to their edification.

Tomkins, going much further than Watts, endeavours to prove that addresses to the Spirit in prayer or praise are unlawful and improper. In compliance with a written request, Tomkins called at Abney Park, and Watts read to him various remarks, and marginalia which he had made on a copy of the tract.[1] As a result of this meeting Tomkins published a pamphlet (21st Apr., 1738) in which he states his objections to Watts's arguments in support of the practice of "Doxologizing the Spirit." "Do you," asks Tomkins pointedly, "now approve of what you have said concerning the *Gloria Patri* in your Book of Hymns, and can you upon your present notion of the Spirit, esteem some of those Doxologies you have given us there, I will not say as some of the noblest parts of Christian worship, but as proper Christian worship? And, if not, do you not think it becoming you, as a lover of truth, and as a Christian minister, to declare as much to the world?"

In Watts's marginalia to a copy of this tract, occur the words: "I freely answer, I wish some things were corrected. But the question with me

[1] See Milner, p. 284.

is this: as I wrote them in sincerity at that time, is it not more for the edification of Christians and the glory of God, to let them stand, than to ruin the usefulness of the whole book by correcting them now, and perhaps bring further and false suspicions on my present opinions? Besides, I might tell you, that of all the books I have written, that particular one is not mine. I sold it for a trifle to Mr. Lawrence near thirty years ago, and his posterity make money of it to this day, and I can scarce claim a right to make any alteration in the book which would injure the sale of it."[1] That Watts abstained from publishing his retired thoughts respecting his doxologies is matter for congratulation; but his reason for so doing is one more illustration of the salient weakness of his character—the acquiescence, by silence, in what he disapproved, simply for fear of giving irritation and perhaps causing loss to another person.[2]

Towards the end of the year Watts received more letters of the charming kind from Lady Hertford. On July 30, writing from Marlborough, she said, "Almost all the hours I passed alone, I have employed in reading your works, which for ever represent to my imagination the idea of a ladder of steps, since every volume seems to rise a

[1] Tomkins replied in a kindly spirit on 5th July, 1738. See Milner, p. 285.

[2] See *An Appendix to Dr. Samuel Johnson's Life of Dr. Watts*, &c., by S. Palmer, 1791, and Milner, pp. 282 and 585.

step nearer the language of heaven." On Sept. 10, 1739, she writes: "It is my opinion that God has in a very extraordinary manner blessed your endeavours to the advancement of piety. I cannot help mentioning to you one instance of it which has fallen within my own knowledge, of a person who, after having drunk extremely hard for upwards of twenty years, has within this year and a half entirely changed his course of life, and is now as sober a man and as good a husband as is possible, and he himself says, that his reformation has been entirely owing to reading your three volumes of Sermons, which were printed some years since." Who that "person" was Lord Hertford also certainly knew. Unhappily, although the sermons reformed a debauchee they did not put an end to severe fits of the gout, to which Lady Hertford's letters still contained allusions.

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON N.W.

CHAPTER XIV

JAN. 1ST, 1741—DEC. 29TH, 1744

CULTURE AND TASTE

55. The Improvement of the Mind,[1] 1741.

In 1741 Watts published the third volume of what I have chosen to call his didactic trilogy—*The Improvement of the Mind*, Part 1. Whereas the *Logic* was intended for the close-reading student, and the *Humble Attempt* for the young minister, this third book is meant to be the *vade mecum* of the desultory reader—the man who, being busily engaged in earning a livelihood, wishes, nevertheless, to improve his spare moments. "Few books," says Johnson, "have been perused by me with greater pleasure. . . . Whoever has the care of instructing others may be charged with deficiency in his duty if this book is not recommended." They certainly may; and the book is as fresh now as it was when it came spick and span from the binder's, and Johnson's short-sighted eyes all but touched its pages. From its beautiful exordium: "Offer up your daily requests to God the Father of lights that He would bless all your attempts and labours in

[1] Works vi.

reading, study, and conversation," down to the final paragraph with its advice to the budding critic, all is sound, wholesome, stimulating. It affixes wings to the mind. Particularly excellent are the remarks on books. Although his own reading had in his early days been largely from the Greek and Roman classics, and subsequently from the English theologians, yet he had found time for the pages of Steele, Addison, Pope, Young,[1] Dryden, Ray, Dereham, Fenelon, and John Clarke[2] (translator of Suetonius,[3] Sallust, Cornelius Nepos,[4] &c.). He regarded Cicero and Paul as the greatest geniuses that ever appeared in our world.

The Improvement of the Mind, Part 2, seems to have been commenced as soon as Part 1 left the press, but it was not published till three years after Watts's death.[5] Though inferior to Part 1 it contains many marrowy and inspiriting passages. When, however, Watts is upon the subject of style, and when he discourses on writing books for the public, he is far to seek. He seemed to think that the rules given by Horace in his Art of

[1] He and Dr. Benjamin Colman corresponded on the subject of Dr. Young. "All of Young," says Colman (Jan. 16th, 1740), "pleases, edifies, and surprises." This was before the appearance of *Night Thoughts*, which was published between 1742 and 1745.

[2] "Master of the Publick Grammar School in Hull."

[3] Suetonius had previously been translated by Philemon Holland (1606) and Jabez Hughes (brother of Watts's friend, John Hughes), 1717. A translation by S. Thomson appeared in 1796.

[4] 8th Edition, 1754.

[5] In 1751, by Doddridge and Jennings.

Poetry[1] are all that is required, oblivious of the fact, that the style is the man, and not merely the man, but the man of the particular moment at which a book is being written. Goldsmith, indeed, went so far as to asseverate that "History owes its excellence more to the writer's manner than to the materials of which it is composed."[2] In Watts's *Posthumous Works*[3] may be found a sort of metrical version of *The Improvement of the Mind*, namely, three poems entitled, respectively, "The Reverse,"[4] "The Mind,"[5] and "Iter Vitæ." "The Reverse," which commences:

> "Happy the man, who free and unconfined
> Governs the little kingdom of his mind
> With steady hand, and wisely doth control
> The noble powers and passions of his soul,"

is mainly occupied with the praises of a country life.

In "The Mind" we are shown how the affairs of the "little kingdom" within us are regulated. After being presented with the definition,

> "The mind's a thinking substance, which proceeds
> By steps of thought, till it produces deeds;"

we are told that when an object presents itself to one of the senses, it is first referred to the Understanding, "who gives it audience in the judgment room;"

[1] This poem was in those days the literary man's Bible. Dr. Wm. Langford and others knew it by heart.

[2] *Life of Beau Nash.*

[3] Published in 1779.

[4] Vol. i., p. 180.

[5] Vol. i., p. 184.

"The Understanding, having used his skill
In passing judgment, sends it to the Will;
And there 'tis either chosen or rejected,
As by the Understanding is directed."

The Affections next make their influence felt. If the object commends itself to them, Love embraces it; if distant, Desire endeavours to obtain it. If hazards are to be run, Fear acts its part. Finally all the various members of the body—arms, legs, tongue, and the rest place themselves at the Affections' service. "*Iter Vitæ*" consists of a series of maxims which, if laid to heart, would enable us to negociate successfully "life's tempestuous scene." For example:—

"Hope not your happiness to find
Abroad; but homeward bend,
And always let your peace of mind
Upon yourself depend.

Passion and Fancy, Hope and Fear,
Must never paint the scene:
But move within bright Reason's sphere,
And keep the golden mean.

. . . .

Nor let the fear of future ill
Your present joys destroy;
Why should the woes you ne'er may feel
With pain your breast annoy?

. . . .

Arm well with fortitude the mind:
And should distresses rise;
Think, they're by Providence designed
For ends both good and wise."

All these poems were evidently suggested by passages in Joshua Sylvester, and particularly by

several in his translation of Du Bartas. Indeed, not only are they all in Sylvester's vein, but occasionally the same similes and almost the same expressions are used;[1] and other poems in the book, notably, "On the Mind's Contrarieties,"[2] which is practically a paraphrase of *Self Civil-War*,[3] are also deeply indebted to Sylvester. There are also parallels between this work of Watts and Boethius's masterpiece, but whereas *The Consolations of Philosophy* came into being after Boethius had been ousted from his palace of ivory and marble, *The Improvement of the Mind* was composed while Watts in his palace of ivory and marble—Abney House—still indulged his cultured tastes.

56. Watts and Shorthand again.

Among those to whom Watts presented copies of this delightful work was Dr. Secker, Bishop of Oxford,[4] who after acknowledging the gift and paying a tribute to Watts as "a diligent promoter of useful and especially Religious Knowledge," observed: "On these accounts I have always respected you from the time I had, so many years ago, the advantage of your conversation; and always rejoiced in the great honour which hath been universally paid you." Dr. Secker concludes by an invitation to Cuddesdon.

[1] The reader may like to compare the line about the peacock, Watts's *Post. Works* i. 160, with the Du Bartas, p. 33, and the lines about the lowly cottage, *Post. Works* i. 182, with the Du Bartas, p. 32.

[2] *Post. Works*, i. 98. [3] Sylvester, p. 565.

[4] Afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

On the fly-leaf of this letter Watts made a copy in shorthand of his reply[1]—which, however, was not sent till nine months later. "My Lord," it ran (the date is 1st Mar., 1742),[2] "Perhaps in the middle of last summer, I had the honour of a line from your lordship, wherein you were pleased to take very kind notice of a book I presumed to offer to your understanding, and amongst many occasional civilities by which you honoured me, you gave me a friendly invitation to wait upon you in the winter. Indeed, my Lord, I scarcely designed it, for my strength and capacities are not the same which your lordship knew in former years. My spirits are few and low, and old age hath made his advance upon me; so that I dwell much at home, and felt a sort of shyness of great company, which is a usual attendant on feeble nerves."

After reference to a political matter, the letter concludes, "May peace and blessings from on high ever attend the royal house, and may all your lordship's acts for the welfare of the Church and the State be under a most effectual ward of Scriptures from the God of heaven!"

At this time Watts wrote the substance of all his sermons in shorthand, using sheets of paper which, when folded, make pages 6½ by 4 inches. Here and there he inserted words in longhand—Proper

[1] See Ch. 10, § 35.

[2] It was deciphered in 1842 by Mr. John Harland, and first appeared in *The Manchester Guardian*, 25th May, 1842.

names, the divisionals, secondly, thirdly, &c.—and the characters are boldly and plainly written, as though the work of a man who enjoyed forming them. Of those that lie before me, the first has neither date nor text; the second is headed: "B[ury] S[treet] April 30th, 1727, Mr. Wroe's [Crossbrook, Cheshunt] about July, 1727. Hebrews 4 verse 1;" from which we learn that it was preached first at Bury Street and afterwards at Mr. Caleb Wroe's meeting; and the third commences: "B[ury] S[treet] May 7th, 1732, Rom. 2 verses, 28, 29."

57. Thomas Gibbons, 1741.

In 1741 Watts received from Thomas Gibbons[1] (son of the Rev. Thomas Gibbons, referred to earlier in these pages, and student under Mr. John Eames) a "poem," which contained, among other compliments, the lines:

> "Watts, who with Pindar's ecstasy of rage,
> To virtue kindles a licentious age."

An invitation to Abney Park made Gibbons supremely happy, and he was subsequently a welcome guest there. In some poor verses written later—for he was an indifferent poet—he says:

> "How high indulged was I when Watts has deigned
> With me the free unbended hour to spend."[2]

Nor was he ever tired of sounding the praises of the writer, who

[1] See Wilson iii., pp. 68, and 178—183.
[2] *Tears of Friendship*, 4to, 1759.

"In one unwearied labour pass'd his days,
And all that labour was to bless mankind."

In July, 1742, Gibbons, after undergoing his examination for the ministry before Watts and other divines, was appointed assistant to the Rev. Thomas Bures[1] in Silver Street. In 1743 he succeeded the Rev. Robert Wright as minister of the Independent Church at Haberdashers's Hall, and many opportunities were from that time afforded him for collecting materials for the biography of Watts, which he subsequently undertook. A flowery, turgid writer, he composed, nevertheless, several good hymns, the best being,

"Now let our souls on wings sublime."

Another visitor to Abney Park was Lady Huntingdon. On one occasion when she called, Watts observed, "Your Ladyship is come to see me on a very remarkable day."

"Why is this day so remarkable?" she enquired.

"This day thirty years," replied Watts, "I came hither to the house of my good friend, Sir Thomas Abney, intending to spend but one single week under his friendly roof, and I have extended my visit to the length of exactly thirty years."

Lady Abney, who was present, "curtseying with all the dignity of hoop and highly mounted head," immediately said, "Sir, what you term a

[1] Wilson iii., pp. 65—68.

long thirty-years' visit, I consider as the shortest visit my family ever received."[1]

58. "Know thyself" Mason, 24 Oct., 1741.

Among the most prominent Independent ministers of the day was the Rev. John Mason, of Dorking, grandson of the Rev. John Mason, to whose hymns reference has several times been made in these pages. Mason of Dorking was a kind of Christian Thales, his writings consisting chiefly of amplifications of the adage, "Know thyself." He would have us "contract full intimacy with the stranger within us." Among his publications was a selection from the prose writings of his grandfather, *Select Remains of the Rev. John Mason, M.A., Late Rector of Water Stratford in the County of Bucks*, a work which consisted of a number of short, pithy sayings; and Watts not only read it with pleasure, but warmly recommended it to his friends. In 1741, when about to issue a second edition, Mason communicated to Watts his intention; and in reply, Watts said (Oct. 24th, 1741): "Rev. and Dear Sir, I was pleased when you informed me that you had a design to print a new edition of the select remains of your reverend grandfather. I have often thought that this collection of short sentences, under various heads, is very proper to attend Christians of the middle rank of life, either in the parlour or the kitchen, in the shop or the workhouse; and for that end I have been a

[1] *Gospel Magazine*, 1776, p. 41.

frequent purchaser of them, to distribute in families among private Christians." The work appeared in the following year, and a little later Mason set about writing the delightful book by which he is universally known, the suggestive and stimulating *Self Knowledge*,[1] which has obligations to Watts's *Improvement of the Mind*.

59. John Brine. Death of Say and Eames.

In 1740 Watts published anonymously his work, *The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*— a series of questions on difficult theological subjects, to which he endeavoured to give answers. As might be expected, the book was attacked from many directions, for as a whole it gave colour to the impression that Watts was not doctrinally sound. His questions were considered dangerous, and likely to disturb the minds of weak Christians, and his answers were regarded as unsatisfactory. His principal opponents were the Rev. Dr. Gill and the Rev. John Brine[2] the leading Calvinistic divines of the day, who objected to Watts as a middle-way-man, a compromiser, and also to what they called his accommodating creed. The heaviest blows came from Brine. Brine, forty years of age, short, thick, and gross, with the face of a gargoyle and the manners of a courtier, was then minister of a church meeting at Curriers' Hall.

[1] It appeared in 1745. The Edition of 1803 contains a Memoir of the Author.

[2] Ivimey, iii. 867; *Earthen Vessel*, 1885, p. 136; Wilson, ii. 574—579. Both were Kettering men, and their names are loved and honoured.

Besides censuring Watts from the pulpit, Brine published in 1743 *The certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ asserted, in answer to a Book, entitled, The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, by Isaac Watts, D.D.*, in which he attacked trenchantly not only the book mentioned in his title, but also other of Watts's theological writings.

Watts, who took the matter to heart, asked Brine to call at Abney House. "How could you," said Watts to him, "write an answer to a book, and attribute the book to me when it was not published in my name?"

"Every one," said Brine, "knows the compositions of the elegant Dr. Watts."

"But," enquired Watts, "supposing I had really been the author of this work, how could you draw conclusions from it which were in all respects contrary to the nature of the argument?"

"I found the positions there," replied Brine, "and I thought it my duty to answer them, in order that the minds of my Christian brethren should not be poisoned."

Watts, whose troubled eyes and livid lips showed how deeply he was pained, observed: "I never intended to assert any such thing as has been imputed to me."[1] However, in his second edition of the work he modified the passages that had given most umbrage to his critics.

By this time his infirmities had rapidly increased,

[1] See *Gospel Magazine*, 1779, p. 285.

and his friends were of opinion that the end could not be far distant. He had projected a work on the "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Human Soul," but being incapable, owing to his growing infirmities, of putting his idea into execution, he recommended it to Doddridge, who gladly shouldered the burden. From insomnia Watts was at this time never free.

His old friend, Josiah Hort, who had become Archbishop of Tuam, advised him to have recourse to horse exercise again; but evidently the advice came too late, for on the same day, Doddridge, writing to a friend said, "I am hard at work on my book, *The Rise and Progress of Religion*, which Dr. Watts is impatient to see, and I am eager to finish, lest he should slip away to heaven before it is done."[1]

In April, 1743, Watts lost his friend, Rev. Samuel Say—the second of the Stoke Newington quaternion to fall—who died on the 12th. A long epitaph was made for him, though two words would have been quite sufficient: SHY SAY.

The loss on 29th June, 1744, of another friend, Mr. John Eames,[2] who died suddenly, led Watts to observe, "What a change did Mr. Eames experience—but a few hours between his lecturing to his pupils and his hearing the lectures of angels."

[1] When the MS. was finished Watts revised as much of it as his health would permit.

[1] Eames was buried at Bunhill Fields, and on his tomb is inscribed, "The learned John Eames, F.R.S."

In a collection of Essays published the same year—*Orthodoxy and Charity United*—Watts once more attempted the hopeless task of trying to unite "those who hold the important doctrines of the Gospel, but differ upon minor points;" and he also published a pamphlet entitled, *A Faithful Enquiry after the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity*. The latter, which contained a "Solemn address to the Great and Ever Blessed God," he suppressed, but it was republished in 1802. When writing it he must have been in intense agony of mind, for he lays out all his difficulties before his Maker, accompanying the recital of them with the plea, "Forbid it, O my God, that I should ever be so unhappy as to unglorify my Father, my Saviour, or my Sanctifier. . . . Help me . . . for I am quite tired of these human explainings, so various and uncertain."

CHAPTER XV

29TH JUNE, 1744—25TH NOV., 1748

A GREY EVENINGTIDE

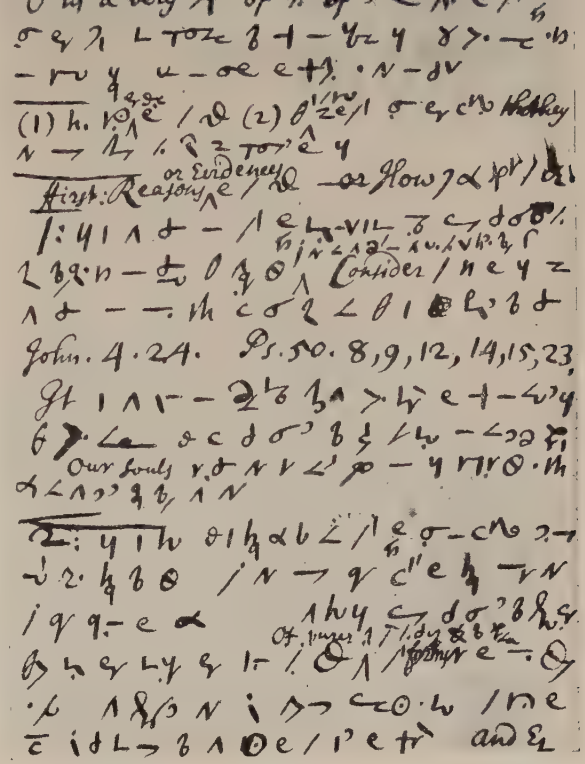
In the meantime there were "heavy tidings out of the north." The young Pretender had landed in Scotland, and when on 4th Sept. he reached Perth at the head of his Highlanders, the hopes of the Jacobites ran high. The kingdom was at last to be wrested from the hated Brunswickers. The Nonconformists of London, with their horror of Popery and arbitrary government, were stirred to the very depths. They passed whole nights in prayer. Every chapel became a recruiting centre for the King's army. Every minister of mark issued printed addresses to intensify the loyalty of his congregation, and to inflame them against the intruders. No one was more energetic than Doddridge, who, acting with Lord Halifax, whose seat was the neighbouring Horton House, concerted measures for the raising of regiments in Northamptonshire. The people were quick to respond, many enlisted, more armed themselves. Their blood was up. Hare-brained as the Pretender's attempt now seems, nobody at the time

60. "The 45." Death of Col. Gardiner, 21 Sept., 1745. Culloden, 16 April, 1746.

so regarded it. The battle of Prestonpans (21st Sept., 1745) at which the King's army was defeated and the saintly and intrepid Colonel Gardiner lost his life, was a terrible blow to both Doddridge and Watts, for Doddridge had loved Gardiner as a brother, and Watts had valued and honoured him. In letter after letter Doddridge refers to the distress he had suffered by "dear Colonel Gardiner's death;" and the event moved him to be more persevering than ever in procuring volunteers for the King's army. "We have had renewed days of fasting and prayer," he writes, "may God return some remarkable answer." It must not be supposed that the friends of the Pretender did not pray too. Indeed, they not infrequently stole away for a short time from chambering, drinking, gambling, and quarrelling, in order to plead for the success of the Pretender's arms.

The invaders, who were marching southward with "a full purpose to throw into confusion and sack the city" of London, had planned to take Northampton on their way. In idea Doddridge often heard "the measured steps of marching men." The Duke of Cumberland, indeed, hoped to give the Jacobites battle in the neighbourhood of the town; but on reaching Derby, the Pretender, recognising the hopelessness of further advance, turned back to Scotland. Everything, however, was saddened to Doddridge by his

ok. Jam Yr Loving Father
Joseph Parker



PORTION OF A SERMON BY DR. WATTS,
in Metcalfe's Shorthand.
(See pp. 136 and 214.)

personal loss. He sent a printed copy of the funeral sermon which he preached for Gardiner to Dr. Watts who thus, on the 14th Dec., 1745, acknowledged the gift: "I am again engaged to thank you for your funeral sermon for the brave Colonel Gardiner; but you give me hopes to see a much larger account of that great and good man's life and conduct. I would hope the rebellion is near to its end; every day we expect some decisive stroke."

A little later Cumberland was marching upon the Pretender. In his army were several relatives of Watts, including Captain Watts, who led a body of infantry, and personal friends of Doddridge. The battle took place on 16th April, 1746, when Cumberland totally defeated—with terrible slaughter—the Pretender's forces, and demolished for ever the Jacobite ambitions. The angel with the millstone seemed at last to be approaching. The heads of the rebel leaders were spiked at the top of Temple Bar, and people made "a trade of letting spy-glasses at a halfpenny a look." A little later, when the colours were furled, the drums unbraced, and the swords sheathed, appeared Doddridge's *Life of Colonel Gardiner*, a book of which its author was able to say, "It has been owned of God far beyond my hopes."

On 2nd Feb., 1746, Watts lost his friend, the Rev. John Oakes, minister of Crossbrook Chapel, Cheshunt, whose place was taken by the Rev. John

61. "In what most harmed him his delight was greatest."

Mason, of Dorking, who had just published *Self-Knowledge*, which deservedly became popular, went through many editions, and was translated into most of the continental languages. While at Cheshunt, Mason wrote several other works, including *The Student and Pastor*, which became almost as popular as *Self-Knowledge*, and an *Essay on the Power of Numbers and the Principles of Harmony in Poetical Compositions;* for which he was largely indebted to the posthumous works of Say, who had made ladders for so many persons to mount; and he was happy in the knowledge that both Lady Abney and Dr. Watts took a lively interest in the work of his church. The same year appeared *The Glory of Christ as God-Man Displayed*, a work in which Watts endeavours to prove the ante-mundane existence of Christ's human soul.[1] It was another of his huge mistakes, for nothing to support the theory is to be found in the Scriptures; and where in matters of theology the Scriptures are silent men would do well to be silent too; but to quote Sylvester's Du Bartas, with which Watts, as we have already shown, was thoroughly familiar,

"In what most harmed him his delight was greatest,"[2]

though unhappily the same might truthfully be said of most of us.

[1] As early as 1722 Watts had referred in *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity* to the pre-existence of Christ's human soul as an opinion not to be rashly rejected.

[2] Sylvester's Works, p. 16.

It will be recalled that Watts in his illness of 1712 was troubled with hallucinations —the result of the unintermittent exertions of his mind in the pursuit of knowledge; and that in his delirium he saw stars, rainbows, moons, green dragons, bears and ghosts. Although he recovered in a measure from that sickness, he still continued to be visited by these dreaded hallucinations, and in his closing years, when his bodily strength was impaired and his mind, overcome by those black and melancholy juices that so frequently troubled him, was permanently enfeebled, they caused him untold suffering. Once more he lived in an empire of chimeras. Sometimes amid his nervous irritation he would fancy himself to be a china teapot, and if anybody approached too near he would cry out for fear of being broken. On the smallness of his stature he was always sensitive; but in these moments of horror his trouble was not his shortness but his tremendous size. He was too big to go through a doorway! No pulpit ever made could contain him! If he were to try to force his stupendous body into a carriage he would be bruised to death! His bearing-chair[1] would break down with his enormous weight! Lady Abney, ever watchful over him, would never allow anybody—not even the assiduous Gibbons—to see him when he was in this distressing state. So vigilant and adroit, indeed, was she, that

62. Hallucinations.

[1] A chair for carrying invalids.

Gibbons, who imagined that nothing ever happened which he himself had not seen, denied, point blank, that Watts was ever in this state. When the attacks were over and the sufferer was free from the distemper of his fancy, a tinge of colour would return to his face, and no one would have suspected that he had been their prey. On one of his placid days, possibly in July or August, 1748,[1] he was visited by Whitefield.[2]

"How do you find yourself?" enquired Whitefield.

"Here I am," replied Watts, "one of Christ's waiting servants."

When some medicine was brought in, Whitefield assisted by raising the invalid on the bed.

Watts having apologised for giving trouble, Whitefield said, "Surely, my dear brother, I am not too good to wait on a waiting servant of Christ!"

When Whitefield bade Watts adieu, it was with the conviction that the "sweet singer" would only for a few days more have to drag along the "crazy load" of his body.

A mystery hangs over Watts's later years; a strange lurid light enveloped them, and their events are blurred and indistinct. Although for

[1] Whitefield returned to England in June, 1748, after an absence of four years. In September he went to Scotland.

[2] Gibbons denies that this visit took place, but Toplady, who records the incident, had it from Whitefield's own lips. It seems, however, to have occurred at an earlier date than Toplady had supposed. The story bears the very stamp of truth.

months his health had been extremely precarious, yet he had spared himself as little as possible both in respect to his private studies and his public ministrations. At times he was so low than he might be said to gasp rather than live. He was still tortured by insomnia, and could never get sleep without opiates, and at last even opiates were ineffective. His habit of constantly reasoning and searching after things unreachable by reason explains to some extent the sad state into which he had fallen—the whirl of emotions that tortured him—when his health and strength failed. The principal trouble of his latter days, however, was the snake-like attitude towards him of his brother, Dr. Richard Watts, and his once favourite nephew, Joseph Brackstone, whose treatment of him amounted to persecution, though why they so acted is quite inexplicable. To the abject Brackstone Watts had been persistently kind. In his will made on 26th July, 1746, he left a thousand pounds (about half of his estate) to be equally divided among Brackstone and three nieces. If Brackstone was informed of this (as probably he was) he ought to have been grateful to his uncle. Possibly he was a dissolute wretch, continually writing for money, to be spent in improper ways. But if that were the case, how was it that Watts did not by codicil remove from his will the scoundrel's name?

63. Watts's Will, 26 July, 1746. Persecuted by his relations. "Waiting God's leave to die."

Richard Watts's crooked conduct is even more puzzling. It could scarcely have arisen from money matters, for he was a man of ample means. On account of Richard's prosperity only £50 was willed to him—left simply, says Watts, "to testify my sincere good will to him and his family;" and on 3rd April, 1747, the sum was reduced, by codicil, to £10. While on the subject of the will, it may be mentioned that £880 was left to be divided between his brother Enoch and his sister, Sarah Brackstone. Other legatees were his nephew, Thomas Watts, £300, his niece, Mary Chaldecott, £170; his friend, Sir John Hartopp, £10; his amanuensis, Joseph Parker, £50. To the Rev. Samuel Price, his "faithful friend and companion in the labours of the ministry," he bequeathed as "a small testimony" of his "great affection for him on account of his services of love during the many harmonious years of their friendship in the work of the Gospel," the sum of £30. He left his library and household effects to Lady Abney and her only surviving daughter Elizabeth.

"The behaviour of Dr. Richard Watts and the wretch Brackstone towards Dr. Isaac Watts, is," wrote the Rev. John Barker,[1] "a most marvellous, infamous, enormous wickedness." Poor Watts was "quite amazed," "and even stupefied with it to such a degree as hardly to take notice of anything about him." Over his face, always pale,

[1] Minister from 1741 to 1760 at Salters' Hall.

spread a deadly pallor. The bewildered state into which he had fallen is further illustrated by what happened when Doddridge called on him in August, 1746. On previous occasions Watts had welcomed his friend with joy, and had dismissed him with tears and embraces. But on this occasion, owing to the action of the persistent "black and melancholy juices," and the huddle of thoughts produced in his mind by Brackstone's unnatural conduct, he received Doddridge coldly, as if suspicious even of him, and dismissed him unceremoniously. "This," says Doddridge, "really astonished me and grieved me exceedingly;" and doubtless Watts, after his guest had departed, was himself exceedingly grieved. His subsequent days were passed for the most part peacefully; and if anyone asked him how he did he would answer quietly and pathetically, "Waiting God's leave to die." He could no longer practise his habit of early rising. He had seen the eyelids of the morning for the last time.

When he was in pain he would say to himself, "Why is my life prolonged in sorrow? Why are my days lengthened out to see further wretchedness? What can I do further for God or for men here on earth now that my nerves are unstrung, my spirits dissipated, and my best powers of acting are enfeebled and almost lost?" Then he would quiet himself with, "Peace, peace, O thou complaining spirit. Dost thou know the counsels

of the Almighty? Silence and submission become thee at all times." Thenceforward he was rarely seen in public, and in accordance with Lady Abney's wish, seldom visited by even his most intimate friends. To his enemies he was quite inaccessible. He still used his pen, however, publishing in 1746 two works—*The Glory of Christ*, and an *Essay on the Freedom of Will in God and in Creatures*—and in 1747 a volume of *Evangelical Discourses* with an *Essay on the Powers and Contests of Flesh and Spirit*, which he dedicated to the Church in Bury Street. It was a parting address to them. "Continue to be of one mind," he says, "live in peace: be careful to practise all the duties of holiness and righteousness: keep close to God by humble fervent prayer and dependence; seek His face for direction, and a blessing in all your affairs."

His last work, *The Rational Foundation of a Christian Church*, is dated from Stoke Newington, 25th March, 1747.

On 15th Nov., 1747, Lady Hertford wrote to thank him for a copy of *The Glory of Christ*, a subject which she said could never be exhausted. "My gratitude to you," she continued, "is again awakened by the obligation I am under (and, indeed, the whole Christian Church) to you for giving Dr. Doddridge the plan, and engaging him to write his excellent book of the *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*. I have read it with the

utmost attention and pleasure ;" and on 21st Nov. Watts communicated the contents of the letter to Doddridge. On 3rd Dec., 1747, her ladyship wrote again—this time to thank Watts for a copy of his *Evangelical Discourses ;* and on the 10th arrived a tribute to him and his works, also in the shape of a letter, from the Rev. James Hervey, of Weston Favell.

CHAPTER XVI

25TH NOV., 1748

A CRIMSON SUNSET

64. "When I am weak, then am I strong."[1] 25 Nov., 1748.

Among those who called on Watts during his last illness was the Right Hon. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, who took with him in his coach the Rev. Dr. Jabez Earle[2] and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Stennett,[3] Onslow's wish having for some time been "to gratify himself with the sight of so great and good a man." Watts, seated in his study, with his meagre, languid body wrapped in his flowered gown, and looking like a little weazened Chinese mandarin, spoke to them in particular of our dependence on Christ, and concluded, "If we part with Him what will become of our hopes?" When describing the visit Onslow used to add, "I thought I saw a man of God." The works of Watts's last days, when he was worn to a shadow by illness, naturally, have many references to pillows, and the sick

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 10.

[2] Rev. Dr. Jabez Earle, for 60 years minister at the chapel in Hanover Street, Long Acre. See p. 107.

[3] Joseph Stennett (1692—1758), Pastor at Little Wild Street, son of Joseph Stennett the hymn-writer, and father of Samuel Stennett, the hymn-writer. See Ivimey iii., 580—586.

room. "The pillow of a believer," he observes, for example, "lies easy under his head, for his soul, his dearest part, is in safe keeping and cannot perish."[1] In these last days too he was evidently uneasy lest the Jacobites should after all get the upper hand in the country. The angel with the millstone was still a long way off. It is true that he wrote, "O blessed be God that we are not found in those popish nations where the priests would teach us to trust in masses and penances, in long and idle repetitions of formal prayers in Latin . . . in sprinklings with holy water and other fooleries, instead of the only appointed sacrifice of the Son of God";[2] but he also observes, "The soul is too valuable to have its concerns entrusted with any persons without our agreement,"[3] and "None but God has a right to prescribe the means of our salvation."[4] He was never heard to express the least doubt as to his everlasting happiness, or anything that looked like unwillingness to die. Death, so hideous a monster to the unawakened soul, had no terrors for Watts, who regarded him as a slave disarmed by and subdued to the service of his Lord, and sent on a glorious message, to fetch the elect to dwell in the land of pure delight.[5] Several times he recited with a self-application the words

[1] *Evangelical Discourses*, Works, vol. ii., p. 47.
[2] *Evangelical Discourses*, Works, vol. ii., p. 47.
[3] *Rational Foundation of a Christian Church*, Works, vol. iii.
[4] *Evangelical Discourses*, vol. ii.
[5] *Evangelical Discourses*, No. 8.

in Heb. x. 36, "Ye have need of patience," &c. Once, after rising from the supper-table, he said quietly, previous to withdrawing to rest, "If my Master were to say to me, 'I have no more work for you to do,' I should be glad to be dismissed to-night." On another occasion, addressing Lady Abney, he said, "I bless God I can lie down with comfort at night, not being solicitous whether I awake in this world or another." To Gibbons he remarked: "I remember hearing an aged minister say, 'The most learned Christians when they come to die have only the same plain promises of the gospel for their support as the common and unlearned;' and so," added Watts, "I find it. It is the plain promises of the gospel which are my support, and I bless God they are plain promises which do not require much labour and pains to understand them, for I can do nothing now but look into my Bible for some promise to support me and live upon that." Indeed he had cast aside all his erudite reasonings, he was no longer a hungerer after the unattainable. He had become as a little child. He revivified. He found his strength in his weakness. His old life—the life in which, when untroubled by doubts, he had written the hymns which took by storm the heart of Christendom—had returned. Nay, he was most alive when he was all but dead. His eveningtide had been grey, but his sunset was crimson of an indescribable splendour. Early in this book we noticed

how impressed he was as a young man with the dying words of Richard Baxter,[1] and these words, which for so many years had been in his mind, came to him with new force on his own death-bed. Turning to Joseph Parker, his amanuensis, he remarked, "It is good to say as Mr. Baxter did, 'Lord, when Thou wilt, what Thou wilt, and how Thou wilt;'" and he added, "It is a great mercy to me that I have no manner of fear or dread of death. My chief supports are from my views of eternal things, and the interest I have in them. I trust all my sins are pardoned through the blood of Christ."

The year was slipping away, the autumn was in great beauty, men noted that the colours of the trees—the viridian, olive and bronze dissolving into umber, bistre, gold and deep red brown—had never been richer. Watts was slipping away, too. The yellow flame of the maple was his corpse candle. When November opened he was unable to sit up except for a very short time every day, and could express himself only at intervals. Lady Abney and Parker watched him with tender solicitude. Dr. Clark, the physician, gave no hope. On November 22nd Watts dozed away much of the day, taking little notice of anybody, but answering rationally if addressed. When Parker delivered to him an affectionate message from Doddridge, he seemed pleased, but

[1] See p. 30. See also Sermon 43.

he spoke so incoherently that it was impossible to put a construction upon his words. Parker, who was in continual communication with Doddridge, concludes a letter written to him that day with, "I can say no more, only I would request a letter from you to my Lady, who cannot but be much affected, as we all are upon this melancholy occasion. I should be thankful if you would put up one petition for me, who am so soon to be bereaved of the best of masters and kindest of friends, whom I have served upwards of twenty-one years."

On the morning of Thursday the 24th, Watts took at Parker's request a few spoonsful of tea. "You have taught us, Sir," said Parker, "how to live, and now by your patience and composure you are teaching us how to die."

"Yes," said Watts faintly.

"I hope," continued Parker, "you experience the comfort of the words, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'"

"I do," replied the dying man, faintly.

Writing that day to Enoch Watts, Parker said, "His sick chamber has nothing terrifying in it. I would administer all the relief that is in my power. He is worthy of all that can be done for him."

Watts had written in *The World to Come*, "Oh that solemn, that awful day, which shall finish my appointed time on earth, and put a full period to

all the designs of my heart, and all the labours of my tongue and pen!"[1] That solemn day had arrived. In the afternoon of Friday, November 25th, Watts's sweet and ethereal spirit, detaching itself from his wrecked tenement of flesh, took its flight into the land which is afar off, and into the presence of that Holy Being whose glory baffles the human mind to imagine, and therefore the human pen to describe. The mediæval miniaturists, in their attempt to convey some faint idea of the vastness of heaven, the measurelessness of eternity, and the majesty of the Deity, used to represent Him as an aged man seated in a series of circles. It was the best that poor feeble humanity could do. Watts had departed into the circles beyond circles beyond circles—into the Divine presence—and, tremendous thought! belittling all else that has occupied the human mind—into those circles beyond circles beyond circles we ourselves must some day mount. We ourselves must pass into the dread and tremendous Presence of the Almighty!

At Abney Park there seemed an enormous gap. Over the house stole an almost unearthly stillness, broken only from time to time by the harsh discordant cry of the peacock, from whose glories the dead, cold poet had so often drawn a moral. It was recognised that a brilliant and godly man had departed, and he was deeply and sincerely mourned

[1] Works v., p. 488.

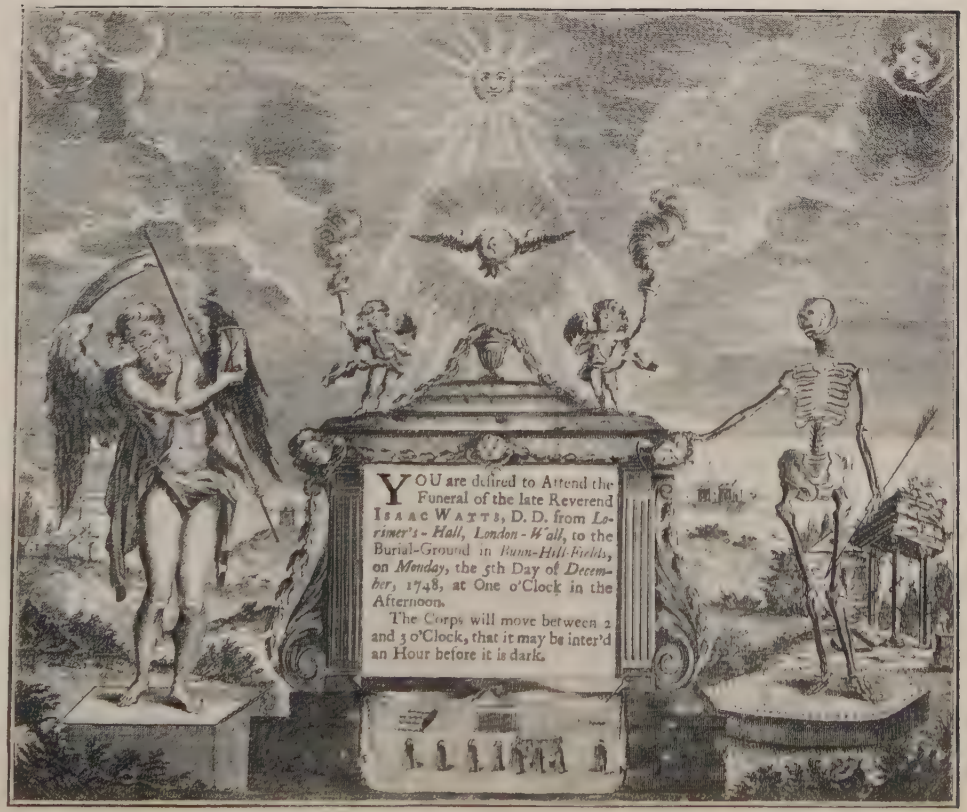
by thousands of persons whose religion he had deepened, whose hearts he had heartened, and whose faith he had strengthened. Watts was dead. To many, the dead poet-seer had seemed superhuman. And so he was. Through Grace Divine man *is* superhuman. One admirer summed him up as "Poet, divine, saint, the delight, the guide, the wonder of the virtuous world." Another said that the world would be a completely changed place if all ministers preached with the force and energy of a Watts.

"When one thinks of the death of so great a man," wrote Nathaniel Neal[1] to Doddridge, "it strikes a damp to the heart like the setting of the sun; though I cheer myself with this thought, that he is risen on some happier world with a new and more resplendent glory."

Gibbons, who saw Watts in his shroud, observes, "The countenance appeared quite placid, like that of a person fallen into a gentle sleep, or such as the spirit might be supposed to leave behind it upon its willing departure to the celestial happiness."

It was decided that in accordance with Watts's wishes the interment should take place in Bunhill Fields, that the ceremony should be as simple as possible, and that no rings should be given. Consonant with the custom of the day, however, lugubrious, printed invitations were issued to the

[1] Son of Daniel Neal the historian. See Wilson iii., p. 101.


YOU are desired to Attend the Funeral of the late Reverend ISAAC WATTS, D. D. from Lorimer's-Hall, London-Wall, to the Burial-Ground in Bunn-Hill-Fields, on Monday, the 5th Day of December, 1748, at One o'Clock in the Afternoon.
The Corps will move between 2 and 3 o'Clock, that it may be inter'd an Hour before it is dark.

INVITATION TO WATTS'S FUNERAL. (See p. 241.)

mourners. It was thought to be peculiarly appropriate that the departure of the sweet, ethereal, sublimated soul of a Watts should be associated not only with an absurdly tall skeleton standing, arrow in hand, on a coffin studded with brass nails, but also with an ill-drawn, half-naked old gentleman with wings, holding an hour-glass and an indented scythe, and standing on a pedestal frightfully out of perspective. A copy of this gruesome example of the undertaker's art of the period will be found on another page.

The interment took place on Monday, Dec. 5th, amid an immense number of spectators, among those present being Dr. Benjamin Grosvenor and the Rev. Thomas Gibbons; and a dreary oration was delivered at the grave and over the little coffin by the painfully dignified, over-learned and leaden, Rev. Dr. Samuel Chandler.[1] A dry and commonplace funeral sermon, founded on Heb. xi. 4, "He being dead, yet speaketh," was preached at Bury Street by the massive and solid Rev. Dr. David Jennings, who thus let slip a glorious opportunity for improving the occasion and magnifying his heavenly Master. Other prosaic sermons were preached by the Rev. Dr. Grey, a clergyman of the Church of England, and the Rev. Dr. John Milner. Moses Browne, who subsequently became vicar of Olney, Gibbons and others, contributed elegies or memorial verses of

[1] See Wilson ii. 360—384.

the ponderous kind, which however comported with the dreary funeral sermons. It was an orgy of dulness. Over Watts's remains in Bunhill Fields was erected an ugly altar-shaped tomb, and in Westminster Abbey was placed to his memory a "busto," to use the term of the time, that bore no resemblance whatever to him, accompanied by "two sleeping boys" with a basso relievo below it, representing the Muse Urania ("Divine Poetry") in an ungraceful attitude dictating to a seated figure which was understood to be Watts, though it would have done equally well for anybody else—both of them the work of Thomas Banks, who ought to have known better. The basso illustrated the lines in the *Reliquiæ Juveniles* in which Urania addressing Watts says :—

> "These odes are mine ;
> Small is thy right in gifts so much divine.
> Was it thy skill that to a Saviour's name
> Strung David's harp ?
> * * * *
> Who fix'd the strings
> Or taught thy hand to play eternal things ?
> Was't not my aid that rais'd thy notes so high ? "[1]

Some mischievous person having broken off Urania's head the basso was removed ; but the ugly and now dirty bust still disfigures the Abbey.

The inscription on the tomb in Bunhill Fields runs :—

"Isaac Watts, D.D., pastor of a Church of Christ in London, successor to the Rev. Mr. Joseph Caryl, Dr. John Owen,

[1] Works vii., p. 422.

MONUMENT IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

(See p. 242.)

Mr. David Clarkson, and Dr. Isaac Chauncey, after fifty years of feeble labours in the Gospel, interrupted by four years of tiresome sickness, was at last dismissed to his rest. In uno Iesu omnia. 2 Cor. v. 8. Absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Col. iii. 4. When Christ, who is my life, shall appear, then shall I also appear with him in glory.

"This monument, on which the above modest inscription is placed, by order of the deceased, was erected as a small testimony of regard to his memory, by Sir John Hartopp and Dame Mary Abney."

Of the Stoke Newington quaternion, all had passed away excepting Hort, who had yet three years to live.

In the course of the present work various tributes to Watts's genius have been cited. As most of them have been from his contemporaries, I have felt that it would be well to give also the opinions concerning him of a few representative men of the present day.

The Rev. H. W. Webb-Peploe, vicar of St. Paul's, Onslow Square, and Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, says, "To have written that one magnificent hymn, 'Our God our help in ages past,' would alone suffice to make Isaac Watts a spiritual hero in the eyes of all who love to sing the praises of God."

"Everyone must admit," observes the Rev. Dr. Robert F. Horton,[1] "that Watts has written three or four supreme hymns of the Christian Church. They are so great and unapproachable that criti-

[1] Minister of Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church, Hampstead.

cism is silent. If only the best of his hymns are taken and put together, separate from all the inferior work, he stands out as the most successful writer of hymns that met the universal needs of men and expressed the loftiest religious sentiments, to whom all the world must be grateful."

"Though hymnody," says the Rev. Dr. John Clifford,[1] "was never so rich in its treasures as to-day, yet Isaac Watts holds his place as first and chief of the leaders of congregational devotion. He is not superficial or unreal, weak or cloistral. He is robust with a large sanity, helping the worshippers to move together as a fellowship in a common awe, a common penitence, and a common aspiration. For melody and massiveness of verse, and for fulness of thought, he is unsurpassed. His conception of God, and of the Gospel, and of life are on the scale of the eternal, the infinite, and the universal. He is pre-eminently Biblical, and yet strikingly modern. God gave the world a great ministry in the gift of Isaac Watts."

The Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, minister of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, and President of the Wesleyan Conference, says: "More and more dear to me are the hymns of Dr. Watts. Their lovely rhythm, their strong, vivid phrasing, their lofty spiritual vision, their intense evangelicalism, their rich experimental quality: these and other features make them of inestimable

[1] Minister of the Praed Street and Westbourne Park Baptist Church.

worth. Dr. Watts's hymns are a noble bond of catholicity which closely unites all evangelical worshippers. Those precious hymns are often glorious Gospel calls. Evangelism is doing its divine work where they are sung. Surely, till our Lord returns the hymns of Isaac Watts will rejoice the hearts of the universal Church."

"For congregational use," observes the Rev. Dr. G. P. Gould,[1] "the best of Watts's hymns are unsurpassed."

"Dr. Watts," says the Rev. F. B. Meyer,[2] "rendered an immense service to Evangelical religion by conserving its personal and experimental aspects in a form which is easily remembered by old and young. Though a few of his hymns contain those darker views of the Almighty which belonged specially to his age: yet the far larger number are keyed to those fundamental and radiant views of the nature of Christ, the glory of His Person and the meaning of His redemption, which must ever be the life-blood of the Church. The most varying moods of the soul will find in his lyrics channel of fit expression which they demand. They are fragrant with the holy and noble uses to which they have been put by the saintliest, most beloved souls that have passed over. They have drawn all sections of the Church into the deepest unity. In great national

[1] The College, Regent's Park, President of the Baptist Union.

[2] Minister of Regent's Park Chapel, N.W.

assemblies, Churchmen and Nonconformists join in 'Before Jehovah's awful throne,' or, 'Come, let us join;' and heaven itself can hardly have anything more befitting the worship of the glorified than 'What equal honour shall we bring?' Few have laid the individual or the universal family of man under greater obligation than Dr. Watts."

"The hymns of Isaac Watts," says the Rev. Dr. A. C. Dixon, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, "are a rich heritage to the Church of Christ. They express the heart of Christianity when at its best." After loving mention of the leading hymns and comment upon the special virtue of each, Dr. Dixon concludes, "Charles H. Spurgeon revelled in the hymns of Watts, and next to the Bible they were, I believe, among the greatest forces in making the spiritual atmosphere, and moulding Christian sentiment among our American Churches, especially in the pioneer days."

"No one hymn-writer," declares Mr. T. R. Hooper, "has given a more complete and proportionate compendium of Christian doctrine and scriptural meaning, in its New Testament Spirit, than Watts. A severe critic of his own work, nothing slipshod or mean was allowed a place. Very few of his lines are weak and none are irreverent. They are free from the ruggedness of some authors who preceded him, and from the unpleasant sentimentality of others who have

written since his day. His verses maintain a high level throughout, and some are among the noblest of human compositions."

The late Rev. J. Brierley [J.B. of *The Christian World*] wrote to me a little while before his death: "'There is a Land of pure Delight,' 'I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,' 'My God, the spring of all my joys,' the noble hymn of the Passion, 'When I survey the wondrous cross,' and the uplifting *Sursum corda*, 'Give me the wings of faith, to rise,' are among the heart's enduring possessions. . . . Watts has none of the passion, the fervour of Charles Wesley, his hymns never rising as do those of the Methodist, as a kind of Marseillaise, the trumpet notes that sweep like fire through a marching host. They are the expressions of a pure calm soul to whom religion was the habit of an ordered life, not the battle cry of a new crusade."

If his verses have affected adults they have affected children also. The Rev. John Barker, one of Watts's friends, was fond of telling how that one day his little granddaughter after singing the beautiful hymn, "There is a land of pure delight," turned to him and said, "Oh, grandpa, heaven is a fine place!" To tens of thousands of children, indeed, religion has been endeared by Watts's beautiful, simple, and touching lines.

65. Portraits and Statues of Watts.

The following portraits of Watts may be mentioned:—

Description.	*Where Preserved.*	*Where Reproduced.*
1. Oil painting presented by Watts to Rev. John Pinhorne.	Above Bar Church, Southampton.	Stainer's *History of the Above Bar Church.* p. 34.
2. Oil painting by Jonathan Richardson. Done in 1703, when Watts was 29.	Memorial Hall, London.	
3. Oil painting, said to be by Gainsborough, who was only 21 when Watts died.	Dr. Williams's Library, Gordon Square, London.	In one of the editions of Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets.* Drawn by J. Thurston; engraved by R. Newton.
4. Oil painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller. $29\frac{1}{4} \times 24\frac{1}{2}$.	National Portrait Gallery.	Our frontispiece is from an engraving of it by Robert Sears.
5. Portrait drawn and engraved from life in mezzo-tints, in 1727, by George White. $14\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$.	National Portrait Gallery.	In this work.
6. Frontispiece of Burder's Works of Watts in 6 vols. Drawn by Hilton, 1810.		In this work.
7. Portrait in *Gospel Magazine*, June, 1779.		In this work.

The principal statue of Watts is that in the Western Park at Southampton, the work of Mr. R. T. Lucas. It is of white Sicilian marble, and surmounts a pedestal of polished grey Aberdeen granite, which has three basso-relievos on the sides.

STATUE OF DR. WATTS AT SOUTHAMPTON.

Photo by F. G. O. Stuart, 57 & 61 Cromwell Road, Southampton.

(See p. 248.)

On the south side (front) Watts is represented instructing a group of children, while below is the inscription: "He gave to lisping infancy its earliest and purest lessons."

On the west side he is sculptured with upturned glance; and underneath is his own descriptive line, "To heaven I lift my waiting eyes."

On the east side he is depicted as a philosopher, with globe, telescope and hour-glass; illustrating Johnson's observation, "He taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars."

On the north side is a marble tablet inscribed:—

A.D. 1861.
ERECTED BY VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS
IN MEMORY OF ISAAC WATTS, D.D.,
A NATIVE OF SOUTHAMPTON.
BORN 1674, DIED 1748.

"From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
Through every land, by every tongue."—*Watts.*
[Psalm cxvii.]

In Abney Park Cemetery, and on the site of Abney House, is a statue of Watts, which was executed by E. H. Bailey, R.A., and erected by public subscription September, 1845, the year the house was demolished.

There are a number of relics of Watts at New College, St. John's Wood.

In less than two years Lady Abney had followed

66. The Last Days of Watts's Friends and Principal Associates.

Watts to the grave. She died on January 25th, 1750; and her last surviving daughter and heiress, Elizabeth,[1] died unmarried in August, 1782, aged 78. Richard Watts died April 4th, 1750, aged 74. Joseph Hort, Archbishop of Tuam, the last of the Stoke Newington quaternion, died in 1751. Thomas Bradbury, thorn in the flesh to Watts, hot pulpiter, bravest of the brave in war for liberty, had in 1728 exchanged his tumultuous pastorate at Fetter Lane for an equally tumultuous pastorate at New Court Chapel, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where, as heretofore, virile and vivid of speech, he continued to draw large audiences, and set men's passions on fire; and continued, too, it must be admitted, to weave into his sermons expressions which might with advantage have been omitted. In his last days no words were more frequently on his lips than "Come, Lord Jesus, come"; and when he had strength enough he would add, "Come quickly." His stormy and forceful career closed on Sept. 9th, 1759, when he had reached the age of 81. In 1748 Lord Hertford became seventh Duke of Somerset, but his life was drawing to a close. Tormented to the last by his gout, of which in these pages we have heard so much, he died on

[1] Sarah died unmarried March 9th, 1732. See p. 113. Mary, who married Jocelyn Pickard, of Bloxworth, Dorset, died without issue Feb. 12th, 1738. They are buried with their father at St. Peter's Church, Cornhill.

February 7th, 1750; and his charming and gifted lady, the Eusebia of fame, followed him on July 7th, 1754, at the age of 65.[1] She had befriended or brightened the lives of four poets—Watts, Shenstone, Thomson, and Savage. She and her lord lie in St. Nicholas Chapel, Westminster Abbey. Watts's pupil, Sir John Hartopp, died at Bath in 1762. The Rev. John Mason died on February 10th, 1763, in the 58th year of his age, and was buried in the Churchyard at Cheshunt; the Rev. John Brine on February 21st, 1765. The Rev. Samuel Price, who for forty-four years had worked with Watts amicably and with mouse-like quietness, succeeded to the pulpit in Bury Street, and continued to superintend the church until his death in 1756. His successors were Meredith Townshend, Dr. Samuel Morton Savage, Thomas Porter, Josiah Thompson, and Thomas Beck, the hymn-writer. After being closed for some time the chapel was re-opened in 1829 by the Rev. Henry Heap, but the cause did not flourish, and in 1879 the premises passed into other hands, and were demolished. The neighbourhood is now a ghetto. The church, which removed to Park Chapel, Bethnal Green, is now represented by the Pownall Road Congregational Church, Dalston.

As regards the Above Bar Chapel, so intimately

[1] The correspondence (1738—1741) between her ladyship and her friend, Henrietta Louisa, Countess of Pomfret, was published in 3 vols. in 1805.

connected with Watts's childhood, the original Meeting House was, as we noticed, demolished in 1727. Its successor stood till 1819, when it gave place to a third chapel, which was opened on April 26th, 1820. In 1875 were erected, at a cost of £7,000, Watts Memorial Hall and Class Rooms, in commemoration of the bi-centenary of the birth of Watts.

DR. WATTS'S TOMB IN BUNHILL FIELDS.

(See p. 242.)

HYMN-WRITERS

CONTEMPORARY WITH WATTS

ABBREVIATIONS.

Wilson, Wilson's *Dissenting Churches; Gadsby*, Gadsby's *Memoirs of Hymn-writers; Miller*, Joseph Miller's *Singers and Songs of the Church; Ivimey*, Ivimey's *History of the English Baptists; Julian*, Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology; A. & M.*, Hymns Ancient and Modern; *Hymn. Com.*, Hymnal Companion to Book of Common Prayer; *Bapt.*, the Baptist Hymnal; *Cong.*, the Congregational Hymn Book; *Cong. Ch.*, the Congregational Church Hymnal; *Den.*, Denham's Selection; *Gads.*, Gadsby's Selection; *Meth.*, the Methodist Hymn Book; *P. & H.*, Psalms and Hymns (Baptist); *Rip.*, Rippon's Selection (28th edition, 1837); *Spurg.*, Hymnal compiled by C. H. Spurgeon; *Stev.*, Stevens's Selection edited by Anderson.

Browne, Simon, (1680—1732)

Simon Browne, born about 1680, at Shepton Mallet, Somersetshire, became in 1716 minister of the Independent Church in Old Jewry, London. In 1720 he published *Hymns and Spiritual Songs, in Three Books, designed as a Supplement to Dr. Watts*, &c., which included "Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove" (A. & M., 209; Cong., 436; Bapt., 229; Gads., 1134; Den., 324); Lord, at Thy feet we sinners lie" (Cong., 534; Rip., 235); and "O God, on Thee we all depend." A few years later his brain gave way, and he was subject to strange hallucinations. He died in 1732 at Shepton Mallet, and was buried in the Meeting-house there.

Number of Hymns in A. & M., 1; Bapt., 1; Cong., 2; Den., 2; Gads., 1.

[Julian, p. 186; Miller, p. 143; Wilson ii., 338—357; *Wright's Correspondence of William Cowper*, vol. i., p. 462.]

Burgess, Daniel. (1645—1713).

Daniel Burgess, born at Staines, and educated at Oxford, was chaplain at various times to the Earl of Cork and other gentlemen. About 1685 he settled in London, and preached first in a meeting-house in Bridges Street, Covent Garden, and afterwards in Russel Court, Drury Lane. In 1705 a meeting-house was erected for him in New Court, Lincoln's Inn Fields. He died in 1713, and in the following year appeared: *Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs by the late Rev. Mr. Daniel Burgess.*

[Julian, p. 194; Wilson iii., pp. 495—501, where there is a portrait of him.]

Cruttenden, Robert, (1691—1764).

Robert Cruttenden, though educated for the ministry among the Independents, was engaged in trade until he reached the age of 51, when he was converted under John Cennick. A little later he joined the Independent Church, Lime Street, Leadenhall Market. In 1744 he published his *Experience*, and with it *Psalms and Hymns*. Among the hymns were, "Did Jesus die but not for me?" (Bapt., 301; Stev., 448); "Let others boast their ancient line" (Rip., 91; Stev., 180); and "What jarring natures dwell within" (Rip. 41).

Number of Hymns in Bapt., 1; Rip., 2; Stev., 2.

[Doddridge's Correspondence, vol. iv., pp. 548, 552; vol. v., pp. 118, 216; Julian, p. 272.]

Richard Davis, born in Wales, was for several years master of a Grammar School in London, where he formed the acquaintance of Dr. Owen. In 1690 he became pastor of the Independent Church at Rothwell, Northants. His cause flourished, he evangelised the whole of the neighbourhood, and his zeal, piety, peculiarities and extravagances were county talk. He published several prose works and a volume of Hymns, the 2nd edition (1694), of which is entitled, *Hymns composed on Several Subjects, and on divers Occasions; in Three Parts.* He died in 1714, and was succeeded by Matthias Maurice, of Olney. The 7th edition of his Hymn Book (1748), has a recommendatory preface by Dr. Gill; the 8th edition, edited by John Andrews Jones,[1] appeared in 1833. Jones, in his preface to Anne Dutton's *A Narration*, &c., 1833, says of Davis's Hymn Book, "It is, in my esteem, beyond gold. Years past I would have reprinted it but for its awkward poetry." He asks us to picture a cluster of the Lord's people, round-frocked and red-cloaked, gathered together in a humble thatched building on a Lord's day, listening to a Gospel sermon by Davis. "After having been fed with the finest of the wheat" they seat themselves

Davis, Richard, of Rothwell. (1658—1714).

[1] For account of J. A. Jones see *Earthen Vessel*, 1868, pp. 243, 269. He was minister of Jireh Chapel, East Road, City Road, and is best known by his *Bunhill Memorials*, 1849. He died in 1868.

at the Lord's table with a rich enjoyment of the presence of Jesus, and sing:

> "How fat the feast! how rich the vine!
> How pleasant was the company!
> We fed on Christ, we drank His blood,
> While with us sat the glorious Three."

[*Memorials of the Independent Churches in Northamptonshire*, by Thomas Coleman, pp. 54—65; Julian, p. 281; *A Narration of the Wonders of Grace*, by Anne Dutton, edited by J. Andrews Jones, Preface, pp. iv. and v.; Bogue & Bennett's *History of Dissenters*, i., pp. 388—398.]

Doddridge, Philip. (1702—1751).

Of the earlier life of Philip Doddridge some account has already been given in these pages. When Watts died Doddridge had reached the age of forty-eight. His academy at Northampton had given him fame. His works, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745), *The Life of Colonel Gardiner* (1745), and his *Family Expositor* (the first volume of which appeared in 1739) had been well received. He had already written "Hark the glad sound, the Saviour comes" (1735), "O God of Bethel" (1737), and other hymns which had been circulated in manuscript. "O God of Bethel," as now sung in the churches is a cento, being Doddridge's hymn altered and improved by John Logan (1748—1788), while the last verse is the work of yet another hand. The following is the hymn as it is now usually printed—Doddridge's share being indicated by Roman letters, Logan's by italics.

"O God of Bethel, by whose hand
Thy people still *are* fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage,
Hast all our fathers led.

Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before Thy throne of grace;
God of our fathers, be the God
Of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path *of life*
Our wand'ring footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread,
And raiment *fit* provide.

Oh spread Thy *covering wings* around,
Till *all* our wanderings cease;
And at our Father's loved abode,
Our souls arrive in peace!

SUCH BLESSINGS FROM THY GRACIOUS HAND
OUR HUMBLE PRAYERS IMPLORE;
AND THOU SHALT BE OUR CHOSEN GOD
AND PORTION EVERMORE."

For some years Doddridge had been a prey to consumption, and it was hoped that a short residence in a warmer climate would benefit him. So in September, 1751, he sailed for Lisbon, Mrs. Doddridge accompanying him. He died there on 26th Oct. of the same year. The first edition of his hymns, edited by Job Orton in 1755, contained, besides "Hark the glad sound," and "O God of Bethel," already alluded to, the following beautiful compositions:—

"Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve."
"Do I not love Thee, O my Lord?"
"Grace, 'tis a charming sound."

"My God, and is Thy table spread?"
"O happy day that fixed my choice."
"Ye servants of the Lord."

A second edition appeared in 1759, the seventh in 1793. Orton also published *Memoirs of the Life . . . of Doddridge*, 1765; second ed. 1766.

Dutton, Anne. (1695—1765).

Anne Dutton, daughter of a Northampton gentleman named Williams, was born at Northampton in 1695, and attended the Castle Lane Meeting, pastored by the Rev. John Hunt. Early in life she had religious longings, and she was deeply influenced by John Mason's *Songs of Praise* and Thomas Shepherd's *Penitential Cries*. When Hunt removed to Newport Pagnell she left Castle Hill Church and joined that in College Lane under the Rev. John Moore. She married first "a gentleman whose name began with a C," and afterwards the Rev. Benjamin Dutton, who became pastor of a Baptist cause at Great Gransden, Huntingdonshire. After the death of Mr. Dutton (1747) she devoted her energies to the service of religion, and published many valuable religious works, including *A Narrative of the Wonders of Grace*, together with *Sixty-one Hymns* (1734). She died in 1765.

[Anne Dutton's Works; Julian, p. 316; *Memorials of Eminently Pious Women*, by Dr. Gibbons and the Rev. George Jarment, enlarged by the Rev. Samuel Burder, 3 vols., 1815, which also contains her portrait.]

Ralph Erskine, born in 1685, was for many

years minister at Dunfermline. He wrote *Gospel Sonnets*, of which the second and complete edition appeared in 1726. It is, however, as the author of sermons rather than as a hymnist that Erskine is remembered. He died in 1752.

Erskine, Ralph, (1685—1752).

[Julian, p. 353; *The Erskines, Ebenezer and Ralph*, by John Kerr, D.D., and J. L. Watson (1882); Gadsby, p. 52.]

Thomas Gibbons's earlier life has already been outlined in this work. In 1754 he became tutor of the Dissenting Academy, Mile End, still continuing his duties at Haberdashers' Hall. In 1750 he published a volume of poems called *Juveniles*.

Gibbons, Thomas.

In 1762 he published a volume of sermons. At the end of each sermon was a hymn; that appended to Sermon 4 being his masterpiece, "Now let our souls on wings sublime" (Cong., 713; Den., 737; Rip., 323). In 1764 the University of Aberdeen conferred on him the degree of D.D. His *Hymns Adapted to Divine Worship* appeared in 1769. Many of them are original, as for example:

"Assist us, Lord, Thy name to praise" (Den., 326).

"Great God, the nations of the earth" (Cong., 908; P. & H., 219; Rip., 420).

"On Zion, His most holy mount" (Rip., 56).

"Forgiveness, 'tis a joyful sound" (Den., 485; P. & H., 110; Gads., 755; Rip., 87).

To the *Gospel Magazine* for 1775 he contributed

the hymn, "Thy goodness, Lord, our souls confess" (Den., 335; P. & H., 75).

He published *Memoirs of Eminently Pious Women* in 1777, *Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.*, in 1780, and another volume of Hymns in 1784.

On 17th Feb., 1785, he called on a lady friend, who greeted him with: "How are you, Doctor?" He answered, "Perfectly well, madam, I bless God." The lady left him for a few minutes, and on her return she found him on the floor in a fit. He was carried to his own house. For six days he lay speechless, and he died on Feb. 22nd, at the age of 64. His activity in the service of his Master, whom he preached both by lip and life, is attested by his diary, part of which has been printed.

Number of hymns in Cong., 2; Bapt., 2; Den., 5; Gads., 1; Rip., 15.

[Wilson iii., pp. 178—184. *Proceedings of Congregational Historical Society*, Vol. i., No. 5, Jan., 1904, "The Diary of Dr. Thomas Gibbons, 1749—1785." Gadsby, p. 62; Miller, p. 177; Julian, p. 420. In the British Museum is a mezzotint of him, 11in. by 9in., painter, S. Webster; engraver, J. Spilsbury; and there is a portrait of him in the *Gospel Magazine*, 1775.]

Hammond, William, (1719—1783).

William Hammond, author of that fine hymn, "Awake and sing the song Of Moses and the Lamb," was born at Battle, Sussex, and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge He joined first the Calvinistic Methodists, and afterwards the Moravians.

He published in 1745, *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*, which included, "Awake and sing the song" (Cong., 339; Den., 561; Hym. Com., 568; Stev., 403); "Lord, we come before Thee now" (Cong., 785; Den., 901; Stev., 827); and "Gracious Lord, incline Thine ear," with the refrain, "Give me Christ or else I die."

Number of hymns in Bapt., 5; Den., 6; Gads., 10; Hym. Com., 1; Cong., 2.

[Julian, pp. 100, 483; Miller, p. 200.]

Humphreys, Joseph, of Bristol and London. (1720—?).

Joseph Humphreys was born at Burford, Oxfordshire. After working with Wesley he joined Whitefield and preached at Bristol, in London, and at Bristol again. He contributed to J. Cennick's *Sacred Hymns for the use of Religious Societies*, 1743, six hymns, including "Blessed are the sons of God" (Den., 481; Cong., 557; Gads., 80; Stev., 181); and "Come, guilty souls, and flee away" (Den., 909; Gads., 55). He was a contributor to Whitefield's *Christian History* (1741—1748). The date of his death is unknown.

Number of hymns in Den., 2; Gads., 2; Cong. 1.

[Julian, p. 542; Miller, p. 227.]

Hunt, John, (?—1730).

John Hunt, minister at Castle Hill Chapel, Northampton, from 1699 to 1709, and at Newport Pagnell from 1709 to 1725, published several prose works, and *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. He died in 1730.

[*A History of Castle Hill Church, Northampton*, 1896; *Memoir of Anne Dutton.*]

Killinghall, John, (?—1740).

John Killinghall was pastor first of the Independent Church at Beccles, Suffolk, and afterwards of the Independent Church, Deadman's Place, Southwark. He died in Jan., 1740. In the following year appeared a volume entitled, *The Life of Faith Exemplified . . . To which is added a few Verses by the late Rev. Killinghall, upon reading it.* Among the verses was the hymn: "In all my troubles sharp and strong," often presented as, "In every trouble sharp and strong" (Den., 216; Stev., 447).

Number of hymns in Den., 1; Stev., 1.

[*Brief Records of the Independent Church at Beccles* (1838), by S. W. Rix; Julian, p. 624; Miller, p. 156; Wilson iv., p. 147.]

Mason, John, of Water Stratford, (?—1694).

John Mason, of *Spiritual Songs* fame, was educated at Strixton, Northants, and Clare Hall, Cambridge. In 1668 he became Vicar of Stantonbury, and in 1674 Rector of Water Stratford. In 1683 he published *Spiritual Songs, or Songs of Praise to Almighty God*, of which the following have been altered and used as hymns:—

VI., VII., VIII. "Lord, in the day Thou art about" (Hymn. Com., 34).

XI. "Now from the altar of my heart" (Bap., 804; Cong., 986; Cong. Ch., 700; Den., 934; P. & H., 908).

XII. "I've found the pearl of Greatest Price" (Den., 190; P. & H., 235).

XIX. "My Lord my Love was crucified" (Den. Sup., 22).

XXIII., XXVII. "The world can neither give nor take" (Den., 610; Stev., 463).

XXIV. "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (A. & M., 213, "A living stream as crystal clear," the alterations being by Keble).

To the later editions from 1692 were added the well-known *Penitential Cries*, the first six of which were by John Mason, and the remainder by his friend, Thomas Shepherd (see p. 266). Of Watts's indebtedness to Mason I have already spoken. Richard Baxter calls him "The glory of the Church of England." As his life drew to a close he believed that the second coming of Christ was at hand. He had a vision of our Lord "wearing a glorious crown, and with a look of unutterable majesty on His face"; and spoke of it in a sermon, *The Midnight Cry*, preached in 1691. In 1694 a report circulated that this advent would take place at Water Stratford; and crowds gathered together from the neighbouring villages, bringing provisions and even bedding, for every cottage was full, and tents had to be provided. In their excitement the people danced and sang; and in the midst of the commotion Mason, who again and again asseverated that he had seen our Saviour, sickened for death. "I am full," he said, "of the loving kindness of the Lord." These were his last words. To his *Select Remains*, published long after by his grandson John Mason, allusion has already been made in these pages.

[Mason's *Life* by John Dunton, 1694; and his *Life* by Henry Maurice, Rector of Tyringham, 1695; Julian, p. 716.]

Masters, Mary.

Mary Masters published a volume of *Poems* in 1733, and *Familiar Letters and Poems* in 1755. The latter contains her well-known, "'Tis religion that can give" (Stev., 590; P. & H., 497).

[Julian, p. 718; Miller, p. 175.]

Rowe, Elizabeth.

Of the life of Miss Elizabeth Singer (Mrs. Rowe) a sufficient account has already been given in these pages. As a hymnist she is remembered by her beautiful lines, "Thou didst, O mighty God, exist."[1] It was popularised by John Stevens,[2] who slightly altered and improved two of the verses, and omitted others. As revised by Stevens, whose alterations are indicated by italics, it runs:—

"Thou didst, *great Triune* God, exist
Ere time began its race;
Before the *orbs of sun and world*,
Filled up the void of space.

Before the pond'rous earthly globe
In fluid air was stay'd;
Before the ocean's mighty springs
Their liquid stores display'd.

Ere through the empyrean courts
One hallelujah rung;
Or to their harps the sons of light
Ecstatic anthems sung.

Ere men adored, or angels knew
Or praised Thy wondrous name;

[1] Mrs. Rowe's Works, ed. of 1796, Vol. 3, p. 37.

[2] See Anderson's ed. of Stevens, No. 142, and Mrs. Rowe's Works, Vol. 3, p. 37.

Thy bliss (O Sacred Spring of Life !)
And glory were the same.

And when the pillars of this world
With sudden ruin break;
And all this vast and goodly frame
Sinks in the mighty wreck;

For ever permanent and fixed
From agitation free;
Unchanged *to* everlasting years
Shall Thy existence be.

To these six verses Stevens added three others, taken from various hymns by Mrs. Rowe, making alterations here and there, namely (Stevens's touches being indicated by italics):

"*I trust Thy grace*, nor *will* I quit
My title to Thy love,
For all the valued things below,
Or brighter things above.[1]

Leave me of wealth, of honour, friends,
And all things else, bereft;
But of Thy favour, gracious God,
May I be never left.[2]

Not at the sinner's prosperous state
Do I at all repine.
No; let them parcel out the earth,
So God in Christ is mine."[3]

Such is the history of the evolution of a very noble and beautiful composition—a composition that has escaped the notice of most of the compilers of modern hymnals.

[1] Taken from Mrs. Rowe's Works, ed. of 1796, vol. iii., p. 51.
[2] Rowe's Works iii., p. 81.
[3] Rowe's Works iii., p. 52. Hymn on the Sacrament.

Seagrave, Robert. (1693—?)

Robert Seagrave, son of a Vicar of Twyford, Leicestershire, of the same name, was born at Twyford in 1693. After leaving Clare College, Cambridge, he took Holy Orders, and worked with Wesley and Whitefield. In 1739 he was appointed Sunday Evening Lecturer at Loriners' Hall, London, and in 1742 he published, chiefly for the use of his own congregation, *Hymns for Christian Worship*, which included: "Now may the Spirit's holy fire" (Cong., 787; Den., 864), and the very fine, "Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings" (Cong., 703; Den., 634; P. & H., 599; Stev., 887). Seagrave, who was an intimate friend of Whitefield, and often preached in Tottenham Court Chapel, was living in 1759, but the date of his death is unrecorded.

Number of hymns in Cong., 2; Den., 3; Gads. 1.

[Daniel Sedgwick's reprint of Seagrave's Hymns, 1860; Julian, pp. 964 and 1,035; Miller, p. 152.]

Shepherd, Thomas. (1665—1739.)

Thomas Shepherd, son of William Shepherd, a Nonconformist minister, was for a time a clergyman of the Church of England, and officiated first at St. Neots, and afterwards in a Buckinghamshire parish. He is chiefly remembered by his 24 "Penitential Cries"—a continuation of the six Cries by his friend, John Mason (see p. 263). They first appeared in Mason's *Songs of Praise*, 1693. The

best of Shepherd's are x.: "Great God, Thou art a God of grace," part of which appears in Gads. (1,009) as "Lord, I approach the throne of grace"; xxix:

> "Alas! my God, that we should be
> Such strangers to each other!
> Oh, that as friends we might agree,
> And walk and talk together" (Spurg., 766);

appendix vi.: "Death steals upon us unawares," and appendix vii.: "My God, my God, my light, my love."

In 1694, soon after seceding from the Church, Shepherd was chosen Pastor of Castle Hill Baptist Meeting, Northampton; and he was with his friend Mason during the remarkable scenes that took place at Water Stratford that same year. After leaving Northampton (1696) he settled at Braintree, Essex, where he was minister for 39 years, and where he died in 1739, aged 73.

[Sedgwick's reprint of Mason's *Songs of Praise*, 1859; Julian, pp. 258, 284, 582, 1,054; Miller, p. 118; *A History of Northampton Castle Hill Church*, 1896, pp. 8—11.]

Stennett, Joseph, of Pinners' Hall. (1663—1713.)

Joseph Stennett, the first of the three distinguished Stennetts, was born at Abingdon, Berks, in 1663. At the age of 22 he settled in London, and in 1688 married Susanna, daughter of George Guill. He was on intimate terms of friendship with Dr. Daniel Williams, founder of the Library in Gordon Square, who married Mrs.

Stennett's sister. In 1690 he became pastor of the Baptist Church, which met first in Devonshire Square, and afterwards at Pinners' Hall. In 1697 he published *Hymns in Commemoration of the Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ*, which included: "My blessed Saviour, is Thy love" (Bapt., 383); and in 1712 twelve *Hymns composed for the Celebration of the Holy Ordinance of Baptism*. His various writings were collected after his death, and published in 1732 in 4 vols. In Volume iv. first appeared his masterpiece, "Another six days work is done" (Cong., 753; Bapt., 667; Stev., 850). He died at Knap Hill in 1713, and is buried at Hughenden, Bucks.

Number of hymns in Cong., 1; Den., 3; Bapt., 3; A. & M, 0.

[Rev. Joseph Stennett's *Works*, 4 vols., 1732; Julian, p. 1,091; Miller, p. 117.]

Tate, Nahum. (1652—1715.) Brady, Nicholas. (1659—1726.)

Nahum Tate was born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College there. From 1690 to his death he was poet laureate; but he is chiefly known by his metrical version of the Psalms, written in collaboration with Dr. Nicholas Brady. Along with much inferior work, it contains the noble and beautiful "Through all the changing scenes of life" (A. & M., 290; Hym. Com., 567; Cong., 45), "As pants the hart for cooling streams" (A. & M., 238; Bapt., 465; Cong., 57; Hym. Com., 149), "Have mercy, Lord, on me" (A. & M.,

249), "O God of hosts, the mighty Lord" (A. & M., 237), and "While Shepherds watched their flocks by night" (A. & M., 62).

Number of hymns in A. & M., 5; Bapt., 3; Den., 1; Gads., 1; Cong., 10; Hym. Com., 2.

[Julian, p. 919; Miller, pp. 111 and 113.]

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ISAAC WATTS.

1. 1705. Horæ Lyricæ. 2nd Ed. 1709.
2. 1707. Essay against Uncharitableness.
3. 1707. A Sermon preached at Salters' Hall.
4. 1707. Hymns and Spiritual Songs. 2nd Ed. 1709; 3rd ed. 1712; 4th ed. 1714; 7th ed. 1720; 14th ed. 1728.
5. 1716. A Guide to Prayer.
6. 1718. The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and applied to the Christian State and Worship.
7. 1720. Divine Songs attempted in easy language, for the use of children.
8. 1720. The Art of Reading and Writing English.
9. 1720. Sermons. Vol. 1. [See Nos. 12 and 20.]
10. 1721. The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.
11. 1722. Death and Heaven. . . . Two Funeral Discourses in memory of Sir John Hartopp, Baronet, and his Lady.
12. 1723. Sermons. Vol. 2. [See Nos. 9 and 20.]
13. 1724. The Arian invited to the Orthodox Faith.
14. 1724. Logic.
15. 1725. Four Dissertations relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.
16. 1725. The Knowledge of the Heavens and the Earth made easy.
17. 1725. A Discourse on the Education of Children and Youth.
18. 1726. A Defence against the Temptations to Self-murder.
19. 1727. The Religious Improvement of Public Events.

20. 1727. Sermons. Vol. 3. [See Nos. 9 and 12.]
21. 1728. Prayers composed for the Use and Imitation of Children.
22. 1728. An Essay towards the Encouragament of Charity Schools.
23. 1728. A Book of Catechisms.
24. 1729. A Caveat against Infidelity.
25. 1729. The Doctrine of the Passions explained and improved.
26. 1729. Discourses on the Love of God, and the Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion.
27. 1730. A Short View of the whole Scripture History.
28. 1731. An Humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians.
29. 1731. The Strength and Weakness of Human Reason.
30. 1732. Philosophical Essays.
31. 1733. Several Sermons in the Bury Street Collection of Discourses by eminent Ministers.
32. 1734. Reliquiæ Juveniles.
33. 1735. The Redeemer and the Sanctifier.
34. 1737. Humility represented in the Character of St. Paul.
35. 1738. The Holiness of Times, Places, and People.
36. 1739. The World to Come. 1st Vol. [See No. 43.]
37. 1739. An Essay on Civil Power in Things Sacred.
38. 1739. Self-love and Virtue reconciled only by Religion.
39. 1740. The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind.
40. 1740. Questions proper for Students in Divinity.
41. 1741. The Improvement of the Mind. Part I. [See No. 50.]
42. 1742. The Harmony of all the Religions which God ever prescribed.
43. 1745. The World to Come. 2nd Vol. [See No. 36.]
44. 1745. Orthodoxy and Charity United.
45. 1746. Useful and Important Questions concerning Jesus the Son of God freely proposed.
46. 1746. The Glory of Christ as God-Man displayed in Three Discourses.
47. 1746. An Essay on the Freedom of the Will in God and in Creatures.

48. 1747. Evangelical Discourses on Several Subjects.
49. 1747. The Rational Foundation of a Christian Church.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS.

50. 1751. The Improvement of the Mind. Part II. [See No. 41.]
51. 1753. Works, in six Vols. Edited by Dr. D. Jennings and Dr. P. Doddridge.
52. 1779. Posthumous Works. 2 Vols.
53. 1800. The Works of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D., in Seven Volumes. Edited by Edward Parsons. Printed at Leeds. Vol. 1 contains a portrait of Watts "Engraved by Ridley from an Original Picture."
54. 1802. A Faithful Enquiry after the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity. Edited by Gabriel Watts.
55. 1810. The Works of the Reverend and Learned Isaac Watts, D.D. . . . in Six Volumes, compiled by the Rev. George Burder. 4to. The frontispiece to Volume 1 is a portrait of Watts "drawn by Hilton." Below it appear an open Bible, a lyre, a globe, and the caduceus (winged and serpent wreathed wand) of Mercury. Published by J. Barfield, Wardour Street.

APPENDIX II.

LETTERS OF ISAAC WATTS.

Gib., Gibbons' Life of Watts. *Mil.*, Milner's Life of Watts. *Dod.*, Doddridge's Correspondence. *Post.*, Watts's Posthumous Works.

	Date.	*To.*	*Where Printed.*
1.	1691, Sept. 30	Enoch Watts (Latin verse)	Gib. 64, Mil. 116
2.	1692, Aug.	His Father	Works vii. 405
3.	1693, Jan. 17	Richard Watts (Latin verse)	Gib. 68, Mil. 119
4.	1695, June	"Horatio"	Works vii. 405

	Date.	*To.*	*Where Printed.*
5.	1698	David Polhill	Mil. 176
6.	1700, Jan.	Arthur Shallet	Works vii. 297
7.	1701, July	Lady Abney	Mil. 179
8.	1702, Feb. 8	Church, Mark Lane	Mil. 181
9.	1702, Mar. 18	„ „	Gib. 98, Mil. 187
10.	N. D.	Enoch Watts	Mil. 189
11.	1704, June 15	Sarah (æt. 23) and Mary Watts (æt. 17)	Gib. 249, Mil. 225
12.	1705, Aug. 24	Henry Bendish	Mil. 226
13.	1707, Dec. 22	Rev. John Shower	Mil. 227, Works vii. 268
14.	1708, Dec. 23	Rev. Samuel Say	Mil. 228
15.	1709, Mar. 12	„ „	Mil. 229
16.	1709, Nov. 1	„ „	Mil. 231
17.	1712, Aug. 19	The Spectator	Mil. 325
18.	1713, Nov. 4	Church in Bury St.	Mil. 327
19.	1717, Mar. 17	Cotton Mather	
20.	1718, Feb. 12	Church in Bury St.	Unpub. In possession of Mr. W. H. Watts, J.P., Liverpool
21.	1719, Jan. 9	Sir R. Blackmore	Gib. 299, Mil. 333
22.	1719, May 2	A Friend	Works vii. 432
23.	1720, July 31	The Misses Abney	Gib. 148, Works iv. 559
24.	1721, Feb. 21	Church in Bury St.	Works i., xxv.
25.	1722, Aug. 4	Rev. Hubt. Stogdon	Mil. 405
26.	„ Apr. 7	Rev. Sam. Rosewell	Mil. 411
27.	„ May 24	Mrs. Rosewell	Mil. 412
28.	„ Aug. 24	Sir John Hartopp	Works vi. 5
29.	1725, Feb. 26	Rev. T. Bradbury	Post. ii. 168
30.	„ June 11	Rev. John Eames	Works vi. 396
31.	„ Nov. 1	Rev. T. Bradbury	Post. ii. 229, Mil. 391
32.	„ [Dec. 23	Bradbury to Watts	Post. ii. 233]
33.	1726	A Lady (Sister of Dr. Share)	Gospel Mag., 1779, p. 657
34.	„ Jan. 24	Rev. T. Bradbury	Post. ii. 177, Mil. 395
35.	„ [Jan. 27	Bradbury to Watts	Post. ii. 185]
36.	„ Feb. 2	Rev. T. Bradbury	Post. ii. 191

	Date.	To.	Where Printed.
37.	„ Mar. 6	Mrs. Rosewell	Mil. 444
38.	„ [Mar. 7	Bradbury to Watts	Post. ii. 196]
39.	„ Mar. 15	Rev. T. Bradbury	Post. ii. 209, Mil. 393
40.	„ [Mar. 17	Bradbury to Watts	Post. ii. 214]
41.	„ Mar. 18	Rev. T. Bradbury	Post. ii. 219
42.	„ [Mar. 22	Bradbury to Watts	Post. ii. 221]
43.	„ Mar.	Rev. Dr. Lardner	See this work, p. 162
44.	1727, Feb. 2	Rev. Samuel Say	Mil. 451
45.	„ Aug. 10	„ „	Mil. 455
46.	„ Sept. 12	„ „	Mil. 456
47.	1728, Mar. 19	Rev. Henry Francis	Transactions of Congregational Hist. Society, Feb., 1908
48.	„ Dec. 3	Mrs. Richier, Bath	Unpub. In possession of Mr. W. H. Watts, J.P., Liverpool. See p. 173
	„ Dec. 4	?	
49.	1729, Dec. 9	A London Minister	Unpub.
50.	1731, July 31	The Misses Abney	Gib. 148
51.	„ Dec. 22	?	Unpub. Sold at Sotheby's, 5 May, 1900
52.	1732, April	Lady Abney	Works v. 493
53.	1734, Mar. 25	Countess of Hertf'd	Works vii. 300
54.	„ Nov. 1	William Duncombe	Mil. 505
55.	„ Sept. 7	A Young Gentleman	New Spiritual Mag., Oct., 1783, p. 163
56.	„ Dec. 26	Edward Cave	Gib. 139, Mil. 508
57.	N. D.	Countess of Hertf'd	*Reliquiae Juveniles*
58.	N. D.	Mrs. Rowe (Philomela)	*Reliquiae Juveniles*
59.	1735, Jan. 21	A Friend	Mil. 512
60.	„ May 23	William Duncombe	Gib. 87, Mil. 517
61.	1736, Jan. 28	Rev. Samuel Say	Mil. 538
62.	„ Mar. 9	William Duncombe	Unpublished
63.	„ Oct. 2	J. Hallet	Unpub. Preserved in Brit. Museum
64.	1737, Feb. 8	Isaac Watts, Senr.	Gib. 2, Mil. 53

	Date.	*To.*	*Where Printed.*
65.	„ Sept. 7	?	New Spiritual Mag., 1783, p. 163
66.	1738, Dec. 21	A Friend in America	Congregation. Mag., Dec., 1836
67.	1739-40, Feb. 8	Dr. Lardner	Gentleman's Mag., 1797, Vol. lxvii., p. 12, p. 655
68.	1739, Aug. 15	Bishop of London	Mil. 637
69.	„ Dec. 1	Doddridge	Dod. iii., p. 406
70.	1740, Feb. 17	„	„ „ 414
71.	„ Feb. 25	„	„ „ 419
72.	„ June 28	„	„ „ 475
73.	„ Sept. 18	„	„ „ 514
74.	1741, Apr. 14	„	„ iv., p. 14
75.	„ Oct. 24	Rev. John Mason	Select Remains of the Rev. J. Mason, late Rector of Water Stratford. 2nd. Ed. 1742
76.	„ Dec. 24	Doddridge	Dod. iv., p. 61
77.	1742, Feb. 26	„	„ „ 75
78.	1741-2, Mar. 1	Bishop of Oxford	Phonetic Journal, 9 Oct., 1886, p. 484
79.	„ Dec. 26	Doddridge	Mil. 629
80.	1743, Jan. 27	„	Dod. iv. 187
81.	„ Feb. 24	„	Dod. iv. 208, Mil. 629
82.	„ Mar. 31	„	„ 230 „ 629
83.	„ Sept. 20	„	„ 269
84.	„ Dec. 14	„	„ 295 „ 629
85.	1744, Sept. 13	„	„ 353, partly unpub.
86.	„ Jan. 17	„	Gentleman's Mag., 1790, Vol. lx., pt. 2, p. 1085
87.	„	Rev. David Longueville	Orton's Life of Doddridge p. 126, Gib. 309
88.	„ Sept. 13	Doddridge	Dod. iv. 353
89.	1745, Dec. 14	„	„ 420, Mil. 689

	Date.	*To.*	*Where Printed.*
90.	1747, Oct. 18	Doddridge	Dod. iv. 514
		A Minister in affliction	Gib. 117
91.	„ Jan. 13	Church in Bury St.	Works ii. 1
92.	„ Jan. 26	Doddridge	Gib. iv. 519
93.	„ Nov. 21	„	Dod. v. 23, Life of Countess of Huntingdon i. 83
94.	1748, July 14	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge	Unpub. Preserved in Stoke Newington Free Library

INDEX

Abney Congregational Church, 54
Abney (Elizabeth) 113, 152, 250
Abney (Lady) 48, 113; at Stoke Newington, 187; dies, 249
Abney (Mary) Mrs. Pickard, 113, 152, 250
Abney (Sarah) 113, 152; dies, 185; reference to her, 250
Abney (Sir Thomas) 48, 53, 55, 112; dies, 151
Abney Park, 191
Above Bar Church, Southampton, 20, 31, 158, 251
Addison (Joseph) 109
All Hallows, Staining, 39
"Am I a soldier of the Cross?" 167
Anecdotes:—
A book, a book! 9
There was a mouse, 16
The stone-mason's dream, 17
The Robber, 96
Bradbury and Burnet, 117
Hissing, 139
An Isaac on the Altar, 160
Shall I speak for you? 161
Be not dismayed, 169
Were I so tall, 174
Watts's hallucinations, 227
Watts and Whitefield, 228
A thirty-years' visit, 217
Anne (Queen) dies, 116
Ashhurst (Robert) 143; dies, 163
Atterbury (Bishop) 105

Barker (Rev. John) 158, 230, 247
Barrington (John Shute), afterwards Lord Barrington, 24, 159
Bartas (Guillaume de Saluste du) 29; his *Divine Weeks*, 61; reference to, 102
Baxter (Rev. Richard) quoted 30, 237; reference to him, 263
Bearman (Rev. William) 56, 57
"Before Jehovah's awful Throne," 128
Bendish (Bridget) 64
Bible, Watts's, 8, 9
Blake (William) 153
Book-keeping, Holy, 168
Bowes (Mr.) Watts lodges with, 108, 109
Brackstone (Joseph) 229
Bradbury (Rev. Thomas) 92; Watts eulogises him, 97; his meeting-house burnt, 107; anecdote of Bradbury and Bishop Burnet, 117; his reply to Bolingbroke, 120; attacks Watts, 132; at Salters' Hall Synod, 136; charges Watts with Socinianism, 157; anecdote of Bradbury and Watts, 161; dies, 250
Bragg (Rev. Robert) 58
Brandley (Joseph) 63
Brierley (Rev. J.) "J. B.," of the *Christian World*, 71, 247
Brine (Rev. John) 219, 220
Browne (Rev. Moses) 241
Browne (Rev. Simon) 253
Burgess (Rev. Daniel) 106; dies, 111; his hymns, 254
Burnet (Bishop) 107, 117
Bury Street Chapel, 98, 177, 198, 216, 232, 251

Casimire (Polish Poet) 22, 26
Chandler (Rev. Dr. Samuel) 241
Charles II. dies, 12
Chauncey (Rev. Dr. Isaac) 36, 45, 47
Cheshunt, 112, 114, 156, 179, 185, 216, 218, 225, 226, 251
Clarke (John) of Hull, 211
Clarke (Rev. Matthew) 47; at Watts's ordination, 58; his serious illness, 78
Clifford (Rev. Dr. John) 244
Collins (Rev. John) 58
Colman (Dr.) 191, 211
"Come, let us join our cheerful songs," 82
"Come, we that love the Lord," 84
Corcoran (Mr. Bryan) 36, 39
Coward (William) 187, 188
Crippen (Rev. T. G.) 58, 59
Cromwell (Richard) 64
Crossbrook Chapel, Cheshunt, 156, 179, 185, 216, 218, 225, 226, 251

Cruttenden (Robert) 254
Culloden, Battle of, 225

Davis (Rev. Richard) of Rothwell, 255
Defoe (Daniel) 55; fined, 194
Divine and Moral Songs, 143
Dixon (Rev. Dr. A. C.) 246
Doctrine of the Passions, The, 178
Doddridge (Rev. Dr. Philip) his early days, 171; at Olney, 181; Letter of Hugh Farmer to him, 188; his *Rise and Progress of Religion*, 221; Visits Watts, 231; his hymns, 256
Du Bartas (see Bartas)
Duncombe (William) 188
Dutton (Anne) 255, 256, 258

Eames (John) 153; dies, 221
Elizabeth (Queen) at the King's Head Tavern, 38
Ellcock (Richard) 198
Erskine (Rev. Ralph) his *Gospel Sonnets*, 259

Farmer (Rev. Hugh) 187
Fay (William) 158
Field (Isaac) 177
Fitch (Mr. Herbert) 98
Fracastorius, 103
Francis (Rev. Henry) 176
Freeby (Leicestershire) 43, 44

Gardiner (Colonel) 167
Gibbons (Rev. Thomas) afterwards Dr., 216; his hymns, 217; references to him, 228, 236; dies, 259
Gibson (Bishop) 203 (where by error is printed "Secker")
Gill (Rev. Dr.) 219
Girdlers' Hall, 23
Girls, Education of, 156
"Give me the Wings of Faith to Rise," 99
Goodwin (George) his *Self-Civil War*, 61, 102
Gospel Sonnets, Erskine's, 259
Gouge (Rev. Thomas) 29
Gould (Rev. Dr. G. P.) 245
Gould (Mrs.) daughter of Sir John Hartopp, 109
Gould (Sir Nathaniel) 34, 109
"Grace, 'tis a charming sound," 172
Green Dragons, 109
Grosvenor (Rev. Dr. Benjamin) 175, 241
Grove (Rev. Henry) 101
Guise (Rev. Dr. John) 191
Gunston (Thomas) 48; dies, 51

Hall (Robert) 81
Hallucinations, Watts's, 227
Hammond (William) 260
Hartopp (Lady) 33, 44; dies, 109
Hartopp (Sir John) 33, 44, 60; dies, 152; references to him, 157, 166
Hartopp (Sir John) Watts's pupil 33, 153, 230; dies, 251
Harvey (Rev. Samuel) 175
Hawkesworth (Dr. John) 165
Hedingham Castle, 143, 163
Hertford (Countess of) "Eusebia," 72, 101, 123, 170, 186, 202, 205, 208, 232; dies, 251
Hertford (Lord) 170, 202, 209; dies, 250
Hervey (Rev. James) 233
Hitchin (Edward) 63
History of Joseph, Mrs. Rowe's, 103
Hollis (Thomas) Watts lodges with him 61, 108
Hooper (T. Rowland) 130, 131, 246
Horæ Lyricæ, 67, 73, 99
Hort (Joseph) Archbishop of Tuam, 24, 221
Horton (Rev. Dr. F.) 243
"How doth the little busy bee," 144
Howe (Rev. John) 29; dies, 66
Hughes (Jabez) 189
Hughes (John) of the *Tatler*, &c., 24, 25, 26, 32, 43; dies, 142; his poems, 189
Humorist, Watts as a, 149
Humphries (John) Watts's printer, 99, 101
Humphries (Joseph) hymn-writer, 261
Hunt (Dr. Jeremiah) 24
Hunt (Rev. John) 261
Huntingdon (Lady) 217
Hurrion (Rev. John) 179, 180

Improvement of the Mind, 180, 210
"Indian, Philsopher, The," 41
Iter Vitæ, 213

J. K. L.
"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," 127

Keach (Rev. Benjamin) 91
Keimer (S.) Watts's printer, 101
Ken (Bishop) 72
Killinghall (Rev. John) 262

King's Head Tavern, 38

Lardner (Rev. Dr. Nathaniel) 162
Lawrence (John) Watts's publisher, 79, 99, 101, 208
"Let me but hear my Saviour say," 81
"Live while you live," 172
Logic, Watts's
London Tavern (see King's Head Tavern)

Magpie and Horseshoe Inn, 37, 38
Make-a-Noise-Tom, 141
Map of Man, by Rev. Henry Smith, 61, 102
Mark Lane, 36, 39, 56, 58, 65
Mason (Rev. John) of Dorking and Cheshunt, 218, 226; dies, 251
Mason (Rev. John) of Water Stratford, 47; influence of his hymns on Watts, 89, 146; his hymns, 258, 262
Masters (Mary) 264
Mather (Dr. Cotton) 205
Meeting-houses burnt, 107
Merchant (John) 108
Monmouth's Rebellion, 14
Mount, Watts's, in Abney Park Cemetery, 50, 193

Neal (Rev. Daniel) Historian of the Puritans, 24, 240
New College, St. John's Wood, 188, 249

Oakes (Rev. John) 179, 185; dies, 225
"O God of Bethel," 172
"Oh, for a strong, a lasting faith," 85
"Old Infamy," 121
Olney, 181
Onslow (Rt. Hon. Arthur) 234
"Our God, our help in ages past," 2, 4, 121, 122
Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 5, 50
Owen (Rev. Dr. John) 36, 64

Paracelsus, quoted, 26
Parker (Joseph) Watts's amanuensis, 170, 230, 237, 238
Patrick (Dr. John) 129, 133
Pickard (William) 58
Pinhorne (Rev. John) 11, 18, 23, 60, 248
Pinners' Hall, 29, 65, 98, 268
Prayer, Make it a pleasure, 186
Price (Rev. Samuel) 63, 141, dies, 251
Prior (Matthew) 73

Reliquiae Juveniles, 186, 193
Remnants of Time, 197
"Reverence thyself," 25
Richier (Mrs.) 173
Ridgley (Rev. Thomas) 58
Robinson (Rev. Nathaniel) 5, 6
Rosewell (Rev. Samuel) 66, 151; dies, 152
Rowe (Mrs. Elizabeth) 72; writes poetry, 73; admires Watts's poems, 74; repulses Watts, 76; correspondence with Watts, 102; marries Thomas Rowe, 103; loses her husband, 123; her *Letters from the dead*, 124; praises Watts's sermons, 169; dies, 199; her best hymn, 264
Rowe (Thomas) husband of Elizabeth Rowe, 103; dies, 123
Rowe (Rev. Benoni) 58; dies, 93
Rowe (Rev Thomas) Watts's tutor, 23, 58

Sacheverell (Rev. Dr.) 104, 105
St. Olave's, Hart Street, 38
Salters' Hall Baptist Church, 137
Salters' Hall Synod, 137
Say (Rev. Giles) 5, 17
Say (Rev. Samuel) 17; his character, 24; in love, 39; his paraphrases of the Psalms, 42; marries, 163; at Hedingham, 164; dies, 219
Scourge, The, 140
Seagrave (Rev. Robert) 266
Secker (Bishop) 214. See also under Gibson
Self Civil War, by Geo. Goodwin, 61, 102
Self Knowledge, Mason's, 226
Sermons (Watts's) 164
Shepherd (Rev. Thomas) 258, 263, 266
Shorthand (Metcalfe's) 135, 215
Singer (Miss Elizabeth). See Mrs. Rowe
Smith (Rev. Henry) Puritan divine, 61, 102
Southampton, 1, 5, 17, 22, 31, 70, 158, 251
Speed (Dr. John) 21
Spot Dial, 114
Spurgeon (Rev. C. H.) 246

Statues of Watts, 248
Stendhal, quoted, 27
Stennett (Rev. Joseph) 29, 234, 267
Stone-mason's dream, 17
Stoke Newington, 48—55, 187—251
Suetonius, Translators of, 211
Sum Book, Watts's father's, 4, 76
"Sweet is the work, my God, my King," 128
Swift (Dean) 119
Sylvester (Joshua) the poet, 29; his translations, 61; his *Soule's Errand*, 67; his *Panaretus*, 72; his translation of *The Map of Man*, &c., 102; of *The Maiden's Blush*, 103; Watts indebted to him, 214; quoted, 226

Tate (Nahum) 268
Taylor (Rev. Dr. Abraham) 181
Taunton (Sarah). See Watts, Sarah
Terry (Rev. Edward) 36, 44, 56, 57
"The mind's the standard of the man," 174
Theobalds, 112—186
"There is a land of pure delight," 70
Thomson (James) the poet, 170
Tomkins (Rev. Martin) 206, 207

Waterland (Rev. Daniel) quoted, 1
Watts (Elizabeth) 10
Watts (Enoch) 10; goes a voyage, 30; urges Isaac to publish, 46; legacy to, 230, 238
Watts (Isaac) father of the Hymn-writer, 4; his Sum Book, 5; Imprisoned, 7; letter to his son, 158; dies, 198
Watts (Isaac) the Hymn-writer; born, 8; attends Southampton Grammar School, 11; anecdotes of his childhood, 16; at Stoke Newington, 23; his midnight studies, 27; his first great hymn, 31; tutor at Sir John Hartopp's, 33; assistant to Dr. Chauncey, 45; his friendship with Gunston, 48; Lord Mayor's Chaplain, 54; Pastor of the Church in Mark Lane, 56; at Pinners' Hall, 65; in love with Miss Singer, 76; his Hymn Book published, 78; friendship with Bradbury, 97; his serious illness, 109; at Theobalds, 112; publication of his *Psalms of David Imitated*, 126; at the Salters' Hall Synod, 136; at Hedingham Castle; his *Divine and Moral Songs*, 143; as a humorist, 149; his *Logic*, 153; at Hedingham Castle again, 163; his *Sermons*, 164; on fear, 166; letter to Rev. H. Francis, 176; his *Doctrine of the Passions*, 178; at Stoke Newington, 187; letter to Wm. Duncombe, 189; meets Count Zinzendorf, 195; loses his father, 197; his *World to come*, 205; his *Improvement of the Mind*, 210; his friendship with Gibbons, 216; his will, 230; dies, 239; his funeral, 241; tributes to his genuis, 243; Gibbons's life of Watts, 260; Bibliography, 270; his letters, 272.
Watts (Mary) 10; dies, 123
Watts (Richard) 10, 229
Watts (Sarah) the Hymn-writer's mother, 7
Watts (Sarah) Mrs. Brackstone, 10, 31
Watts (Thomas) Hymn-writer's grandfather, 4, 10
Watts's Wig at Cheshunt, 115
Wat Tyler, 54
Webb-Peploe (Rev. H. W.) 243
"Were I so tall to reach the pole," 174
"When I can read my title clear," 71
"When I survey the wondrous cross," 86
Whitefield (Rev. George) 203, 204, 228
Whittington's Palace, 37
Will, Watts's, 229
World to come, The, 179, 238
Worry Book, 154, 178
Williams (Dr.) his Library, 161
Wright (Dr. Samuel) 107
Wroe (Rev. Caleb) 156; dies, 179; reference to his meeting, 216

Young (Rev. Dinsdale) 244

Zinzendorf (Count) 195

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